

## George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799

To CHARLES PETTIT

Mount Vernon, August 16, 1788.

Sir: I have to acknowledge with much sensibility the receipt of your letter, dated the 5th instant, in which you offer your congratulations on the prospect of an established government, whose principles seem calculated to secure the benefits of society to the Citizens of the United States; and in which you also give a more accurate state of fœderal Politics in Pennsylvania than I had before received. It affords me unfeigned satisfaction to find, that the acrimony of parties is much abated.

Doubtless there are defects in the proposed system which may be remedied in a constitutional mode. I am truly pleased to learn that those who have been considered as its most violent opposers will not only acquiesce peaceably, but cooperate in its organization and content themselves with asking amendments in the manner prescribed by the Constitution. The great danger, in my view, was that every thing might be thrown into the last stage of confusion before any government whatsoever could have been established; and that we should suffer a political shipwreck, without the aid of one friendly star to guide us into Port. Every real patriot must have lamented that private feuds and local politics should have unhappily insinuated themselves into, and in some measure obstructed the discussion of a great national question. A just opinion, that the People when rightly informed will decide in a proper manner, ought certainly to

have prevented all intemperate or precipitate proceedings on a subject of so much magnitude; nor should a regard to common decency have suffered the zealots in the minority to stigmatize the authors of the Constitution as Conspirators and Traitors. However unfavorably individuals, blinded by passion and prejudice, might have thought of the characters who composed the Convention; the election of those characters by the Legislatures of the several States, and the reference of their Proceedings to the free determination of their Constituents, did not carry the appearance of *a private combination to destroy the liberties of their Country* . Nor did the outrageous disposition, which some indulged in traducing and villifying the members, seem much calculated to produce concord or accommodation.

For myself, I expected not to be exempted from obloquy any more than others. It is the lot of humanity. But if the shafts of malice had been aimed at me in ever so pointed a manner on this occasion, shielded as I was by a consciousness of having acted in conformity to what I believed my duty, they would have fallen blunted from their mark. It is known to some of my countrymen,

and can be demonstrated to the conviction of all, that I was in a manner constrained to attend the general Convention in compliance with the earnest and pressing desires of many of the most respectable characters in different parts of the Continent.

At my age, and in my circumstances, what sinister object, or personal emolument had I to seek after, in this life? The growing infirmities of age and the increasing love of retirement, daily confirm my

decided predilection for domestic life: and the great Searcher of human hearts is my witness, that I have no wish, which aspires beyond the humble and happy lot of living and dying a private citizen on my own farm.

Your candour and patriotism in endeavoring to moderate the jealousies and remove the prejudices, which a particular class of Citizens had conceived against the new government, are certainly very commendable; and must be viewed as such by all true friends to their Country. In this description I shall fondly hope I have a right to comprehend myself; and shall conclude by professing a grateful sense of your favorable opinion for me, with which I am, &c.<sup>43</sup>

---

43. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To LEWIS MORRIS

Mount Vernon, December 13, 1788.

Dear Sir: The letter which you did me the honor to write to me on the 14th of November, has been duly received.

I was well apprised of the sacrifices which you had made and the services you had rendered to your Country, during the progress of the late Revolution. Unfortunately, from the want of a more efficient general government, the zealous advocates for and patriotic sufferers in the acquisition of American independence, have not as yet (in very many instances) enjoyed the full fruits of their labours. The prospect of national and individual prosperity, it is hoped and believed, is now more favorable than it hath hitherto been. It appears to me, that we shall want nothing, but good dispositions, industry and frugality, under the proposed System, to make us a truly happy people. While I am convinced that the motives for the intimation you have given in your letter are laudable; you will permit me to say that the subject, so far as it relates to myself, is peculiarly embarrassing and distressing. I have ever flattered myself, that I should be permitted to pass the remainder of my days in the bosom of

retirement. I still have the sincerest hopes, that I shall not be called to a situation, where it might be incumbent on me to have any agency in disposing of appointments, under the general government.

You will, therefore, be pleased to excuse me from entering upon any anticipation whatsoever; and at the sametime, to do me the justice of believing that I entertain a very great regard for yourself and family. Mrs. Washington and myself desire that our compliments may be presented to Mrs. Morris. I am, etc.<sup>84</sup>

---

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### To BENJAMIN FISHBOURN

Mount Vernon, December 23, 1788.

Sir: Your letter of the 20th. of September, has been put into my hands, only a few days ago: in acknowledging the receipt, I take occasion, with very great satisfaction, to congratulate you on your appointment to so honorable an office, as that which you now hold in the State of Georgia. For you may rest assured, Sir, that, while I feel a sincere pleasure in hearing of the prosperity of my army acquaintances in general, the satisfaction is of a nature still more interesting, when the success has attended an officer with whose services I was more particularly acquainted.

From the place you held in the military staff this must have been the case with your services: and I will say, I am truly glad to find, that your merits have been so respectfully noticed in civil life.

I wish I could with equal truth have added, that the intimation contained in your letter, had been received without producing some disagreeable emotion; or rather some embarrassment from my not knowing well what to say on a subject, respecting which I may very possibly never have occasion to act.

The future is all a scene of darkness and uncertainty to me, on many accounts.

It is known; that when I left the army, it was with a fixed determination, never to be engaged again in any public affairs. Events, which were not then foreseen, have since turned up: but, perhaps, neither those or any which can happen, will be of sufficient urgency to justify me in foregoing my fixed determination and sacrificing my domestic happiness. So much, at present, I can say with the strictest truth; that nothing but a conviction of the indispensable necessity of the measure, can ever induce me to make the sacrifice. That conviction not having been made; it would be improper for me

to say any thing whatsoever on the immediate point to which you allude; and because as a farther reason if it should be my fate to administer the government, I will go into it free from engagements of every kind and nature whatsoever making, when the pretensions of every candidate are brought to view as far as my judgment shall direct me, justice, and the public good file sole objects of my pursuits. I am happy to hear that Genl. Wayne is likely to be elected to the fœderal Senate. It is my most earnest wish that none but the most disinterested, able and virtuous men may be appointed to either house of Congress: because, I think, the tranquility and happiness of this Country will depend essentially upon that circumstance. With sentiments of esteem I have the honor, etc.<sup>97</sup>

---

97. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To HENRY EMANUEL LUTTERLOH**

Mount Vernon, January 1, 1789.

Sir: I have regularly received your letter dated the 27th. of November. It would take up more time than I could well spare, to notice the applications which have been made to me in consequence of the New government. In answer to as many, as I have been at leisure to acknowledge, I have invariably represented the delicacy of my situation, the impropriety of bringing such things before me, the decided resolution I had formerly made, and the ardent wishes I still entertain of remaining in a private life. You will not then expect that I should commit myself by saying any thing on a subject, which has never failed to embarrass and distress me beyond measure, whensoever it has been forced upon my consideration.

I can therefore have nothing to add, but that, with wishes for your prosperity, I am, etc.<sup>3</sup>

---

3. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To WILLIAM PIERCE**

4

Mount Vernon, January 1, 1789.

Sir: As it would be altogether improper for me to anticipate any thing on the event which you suppose may happen; I only write to let you know that I have duly received your letter of November

1st. I most sincerely and fervently hope it will be found, that I shall not be in a situation to have any agency in the disposal of Fœderal appointments. For you will permit me to say, that the choice is as yet very far from being certain; and that should it (contrary to all my wishes) fall upon me, I shall certainly be disposed to decline the acceptance, if it may, by any means be done consistently with the dictates of duty.

In this to me unpleasant state of affairs when I cannot but feel myself disagreeably affected by having the subject even obliquely forced upon my mind, you will be pleased to consider my studied reserve as not in the least intended to militate against your pretensions, and as not having any reference, in the remotest degree, to an office, for which I perceive there will be several competitors.

Altho' I have thought, it would ill become me at present to be more explicit with any person on public matters; yet in all personal considerations I take a pleasure in subscribing myself with sentiments of esteem, &c.

---

#### 4. Of Georgia.

On January 1 Washington drew up a series of instructions for James Bloxam, which he headed "A View of the Work at the Ferry and French's Plantations in the year 1789, with general directions for the executn." This paper, entirely in Washington's writing and covering 3 ½ folio pages, is in the *Washington Papers*. It is followed by a similar one addressed to John Fairfax, which is headed "A View of the Work at the several Plantations in the year 1789. and general directions for the execution of it." This document is 7 folio pages long. The directions to Fairfax end as follows:

"To request that my people may be at their work as soon as it is light, work till it is dark, and be diligent while they are at it, can hardly be necessary; because the propriety of it must strike every Manager who attends to my interest, or regards his own character; and who, on reflecting, must be convinced that lost labour is never to be regained; the presumption being that every labourer (male or female) does as much in the 24 hours as their strength without endangering the health, or constitution will allow of; but there is much more in what is called head work, that is in the manner of conducting business, than is generally imagined. For take two Managers and give to each the same number of labourers, and let these labourers be equal in all respects. Let both these Managers rise equally early, go equally late to rest, be equally active, sober and industrious, and yet, in the course of the year, one of them, without pushing the hands that are under him more than the other, shall have performed infinitely more work. To what is this owing? Why, simply to contrivance resulting from that forethought and arrangement which will guard against the misapplication of labour, and doing it unseasonably: For in the affairs of farming or Planting, more perhaps than in any other, it may justly be said there is a time for all things. Because if a man will do that kind of

work in clear and mild weather which can as well be done in frost, Snow and rain, when these come, he has nothing to do; consequently, during that period there is a total loss of labour. In plowing too, though the field first intended for it, or in which the plows may actually have been at work, should, from its situation, be rendered unfit (by rain or other causes) to be worked; and other spots even though the call for them may not be so urgent can be plowed, this business ought to go on; because the general operation is promoted by it. So with respect to other things, and particularly Carting; where nothing is more common than, when loads are to go to a place, and others to be brought from it, though not equally necessary at the same moment, to make two trips when one would serve. These things are only enumerated to shew that the Manager who takes a comprehensive view of his business, will throw no labour away.

"For this reason it is, I have here endeavoured to give a general view of my plans, with the business of the year, that the concerns of the several plantations may go on without application daily, for orders unless it be in particular cases, or where these directions are not clearly understood."

## To HARRY INNES

Mount Vernon, March 2, 1789.

Sir: I have been favored by the receipt of your obliging letter, dated the 18th of December last,<sup>54</sup> just in time to send my acknowledgment by a person who is immediately returning to Kentucky. This circumstance prevents me from expressing, so fully as I might otherwise have done, the sense I have of the very patriotic sentiments you entertain respecting the important matter, which is the subject of your letter. As a friend to United America, I embrace, with extreme satisfaction the proposals you are pleased to offer of transmitting farther intelligence. For which purpose, I will endeavor to arrange and send you a Cypher by the earliest safe conveyance. In the mean time, I rely implicitly upon that honor which you have pledged, and those professions which you have made; and sincerely hope, that your activity and discretion will be successful in developing the machinations of all those, who, by sowing the seeds of disaffection, may attempt to separate any portion of the United States from the Union. I will only add; for myself, I have little doubt but that a perseverance in temperate measures and good dispositions will

---

54. In this letter Innes reported that Colonel Connolly was in Kentucky, endeavoring to stir up the inhabitants to seize New Orleans and secure the navigation of the Mississippi. He claimed to be able to furnish a British force to aid in taking New Orleans. Innes's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

produce such a system of national policy, as shall be mutually advantageous to all parts of the American Republic. I am etc.<sup>55</sup>

---

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### To THOMAS BARCLAY

Mount Vernon, March 2, 1789.

Sir: The letter which you addressed to me, on the 18th. of last month, has come to hand; and requires that I should write to you a few words on the subject of it.

Previous to the receipt of your letter I had been apprised of your desires by Colo. Humphreys, and made acquainted with the favorable opinion of your services, entertained by the several public characters from America in Europe. You will permit me to say; that, although I have reason to coincide with them in sentiment, yet it would be a departure from a rule, which I had laid down for myself, to go beyond the acknowledgment of having received applications of a similar nature. For [should it become indispensable for me to occupy the Office, in which your letter pre-supposes me, I shall endeavor to enter upon it as free from all kinds of prejudices, as I shall certainly be from all pre-engagements of every possible discription. As my sole object would be to adhere strictly to justice and my country's good, I should wish to be in a predicament, which would allow me to weigh with the utmost impartiality the pretensions of the different Candidates for appointments.

This being my general manner of thinking, you will be pleased to consider this answer as in no respect intended to affect your particular claims to the public attention.

I request in all personal considerations, you will be persuaded that, I remain, etc.]<sup>56</sup>

---

56. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On March 2 Washington wrote to Robert Ballard, in answer to his application, practically the same answer as that portion of this letter which is inclosed in brackets. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

### To SAMUEL MEREDITH

Mount Vernon, March 5, 1789.

Dear Sir: I take the earliest occasion to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 23rd. of February<sup>65</sup> in order to shew how desirous I am of acting a candid part in respect to the application contained in it.

Should it become absolutely necessary for me to occupy the situation, in which your letter pre-supposes me, I have determined to go into it, perfectly free from all engagements of every nature whatsoever. A conduct, in conformity to this resolution, would enable me in ballancing the various pretensions of different Candidates for appointments, to act with a sole reference to justice and the public good. This is, in substance, the answer that I have given to all applications (and they are not few) which have already been made. Among the places sought after in these applications, I must not conceal, the office to which you particularly allude, is comprehended. This fact I tell you merely as matter of information. My general manner of thinking, as to the propriety of holding myself totally dis-engaged, will apologize for, my not enlarging farther on the subject.

Though, I am sensible, the public suffrage that places a Man in office, should prevent him from

---

65. In the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress. He applied for an appointment to the "Impost department."

being swayed, in the execution of it, by his private inclinations: yet he may assuredly, without violating his duty, be indulged in the continuance of his former attachments. I beg you will do me the justice to believe that in all personal considerations, I am etc.<sup>66</sup>

---

66. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On March 5 Washington wrote briefly to John Dawson, thanking him for information: "the subject is of great moment; and hope such measures will be adopted, respecting the Western Country, as will prevent the United States from receiving any detrement." This letter is in the "Letter Book"; but Dawson's letter, which was dated Feb. 23, 1788, is not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

## To BENJAMIN LINCOLN

Mount Vernon, March 11, 1789.



My Dear Sir: I was favored last evening by yours of the 20th. Ultimo:<sup>70</sup> and am glad to be confirmed in the idea that a spirit of unanimity is becoming still more prevalent.

My having company with me at present and much occupied with my private concerns, will be considered by you as sufficient reasons for my writing in a laconic manner. I will therefore reply to the principal scope of your letter with all that brevity, frankness and friendship, which, in such cases, one friend has a right to expect from another.

Should it become inevitably necessary for me to go into the chair of government, I have determined to go into it, free from all positive engagements of every nature whatsoever. This is the answer I have already given to a multiplicity of applications; and I have assigned as the true reason of my conduct, the predominant desire I had of being at liberty to act with a sole reference to justice and the public good. But without deviating from that line of proceeding which I had chalked out for myself, I may be permitted to say to you, My dear Sir, that you need not doubt my inclinations are very sincere and very strong to serve you, if I can do it, consistently

---

70. In the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress. In his letter he does not apply for any particular office.

with my duty to the public. This I say, because I have known you in public life: for I do not intend to be swayed, in the disposal of places, by motives arising from the ties of friendship or blood.

What offices there may be under the New government, or what pretensions may be urged in favor of the different candidates I cannot pretend to foretell: all I will add at present, is, that you may rest assured I am etc.<sup>71</sup>

---

71. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To FRANCIS HOPKINSON**

Mount Vernon, March 13, 1789.

Dear Sir: Your good humor of the 3d,<sup>73</sup> which made me laugh heartily, has fairly driven me out of the field, not, indeed, into the Potowmack, but into a resolution not to strain my wits in making one word of reply, except in sober earnest.

This preliminary being settled, I will tell you all I have to say, in *three* words: though *one* might perhaps suffice, for you know they say “a word to the wise is enough”, and why not to the witty? Be assured then, that my inclinations to serve you are sincere and strong, not because I have a friendship for you (for friendship ought to have nothing to do with the matter) but because I think you capable of serving the public well. Yet you will suffer me to add, that, from the time when I began to fear it would become unavoidably necessary for me to go again into public life, I determined in that case to go into it, free from all possible engagements of every kind whatsoever. To this determination, I have faithfully adhered. For I conceived my own reputation, as well as the interest of the community required, that I should be totally at liberty, when in office, to act with a sole reference to justice and the public good. In all cases, I am etc.<sup>74</sup>

---

73. In the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress. He applied for appointment in the Admiralty under the Constitution, having served 9 years in the Pennsylvania Admiralty and his commission being about to expire.

---

74. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On March 14 Washington wrote briefly to Henry Lee: “If we have anything which can be of service to Mrs. Lee on her passage, to command it.” The full text of this letter is printed in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 7, p. 182.

## To DOCTOR FREDERICK PHILE

Mount Vernon, March 15, 1789.

Sir: Yesterday's post brought me your favor of the 7th.<sup>76</sup> In answer to it, I will briefly observe, that if the Administration of the New Government should inevitably fall upon me, that I will go into office *totally* free from pre-engagements of *every* nature whatsoever. And in recommendations to appointments will make justice and the public good, my *sole* objects. Resolving to pursue this rule, invariably, I can add nothing more on the subject of your application,<sup>77</sup> until, the time shall arrive when the merit and justice of every claimant shall appear, when, so far as the matter depends upon me, the principles above mentioned shall to the best of my judgement have their full operation. I am etc.<sup>75</sup>

---

76. In the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

---

---

77. Phile had applied for the appointment of naval officer of Philadelphia.

---

75. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To GUSTAVUS SCOTT**

Mount Vernon, March 21, 1789.

Sir: I was yesterday favored with the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, through the medium of my Nephew to whom it had been committed: and I must be dispensed with for only giving the general reply, which I have lately found it necessary to give on several similar occasions. For since it has been expected that I should be called to the chair of government, many applications have been made to me on the subject of appointments to the different offices which might be established under it. In answer to which I have written to the following effect.

That, in case it should be my unavoidable lot to go again into public office, I had determined to go into it, without being under any possible obligations or promises of any nature whatsoever: and that, in my judgment, three things ought to be much regarded by the person who should have the power of making nominations, viz, the fitness of characters to fill offices, the comparative merit of the claims of the different candidates for appointments, and the equal distribution of those appointments (so far as that matter might be conveniently arranged) among Inhabitants of the various States in the Union. To these things I added, that these considerations were not intended to be considered as affecting in any manner whatsoever the pretensions of the person to whom they were addressed. As I thought it

highly requisite for my own reputation, as well as for the interest of the community, that, in all events, I should hold myself perfectly at liberty to act with a sole reference to justice and the public good.

From this clue, Sir, you will be able to trace my general fashion of thinking on the subject of appointments. Being somewhat pressed in point of time, I will therefore only add, that I can at present form no conjecture what or how many offices will be created in the Judicial Department, at the commencement of the government. Some respectable professional knowledge will doubtless be necessary for filling such as may be created.

With sentiments of great esteem etc.<sup>87</sup>

87. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To SAMUEL VAUGHAN**

Mount Vernon, March 21, 1789.

My dear Sir: I have just now been favored with the receipt of your letter, dated the 10th. of October last; and would not delay to make my acknowledgments by the earliest opportunity. While I appreciate with gratitude the favorable sentiments you are pleased to express for me; I flatter myself, in the communication of the following ideas which have occurred on the subject of your letter, you will be persuaded I am influenced alone by that genuine frankness, which is most consistant with friendship and which I desire may ever be a characteristic feature in my conduct through life.

The event which I have long dreaded, I am at last constrained to believe, is now likely to happen. For that I have, during many months, been oppressed with an apprehension it might be deemed unavoidably expedient for me to go again into public life, is known to all, who know me. But from the moment, when the necessity had become more apparent, and as it were inevitable, I anticipated, in a heart filled with distress, the ten thousand embarrassments, perplexities and troubles to which I must again be exposed in the evening of a life, already nearly consumed in public cares. Among all these anxieties, I will not conceal from you, I anticipated none greater, than

those that were likely to be produced by applications for appointments to the different offices, which would be created under the new Government. Nor will I conceal, that my apprehensions have already been but too well justified. Scarcely a day passes in which applications of one kind or another do not arrive. Insomuch, that had I not early adopted some general principles, I should before this time have been wholly occupied in this business. As it is, I have found the number of answers, which I have been necessitated to give in my own hand, an almost insupportable burden to me. The points in which all these answers have agreed in substance are: that should it be my lot to go again into public office, I would go into it, without being under any possible engagements of any nature whatsoever: that, so far as I know my own heart, I would not be in the remotest degree influenced, in making nominations, by motives arising from the ties of amity or blood: and that, on the other hand, three things, in my opinion, ought principally to be regarded, viz, the fitness of characters to fill offices, the comparative claims from the former merits and sufferings in service of the different candidates, and the distribution of appointments in as equal a proportion as might be to persons belonging to the different States in the Union; for without precautions of this kind, I

clearly foresaw the endless jealousies, and, possibly, the fatal consequences, to which a government, depending altogether on the good will of the people for its establishment, would certainly be exposed in its early stages. Besides I thought, whatever

the effect might be in pleasing or displeasing any individuals at the present moment, a due concern for my own reputation not less decisively than a sacred regard to the interest of the community, required that I should hold myself absolutely at liberty to act, while in office, with a sole reference to justice and the public good. It is true, in such a fallible state of existence I may err, and from the want of a complete knowledge of characters in my nominations: but my errors shall be such as result from the head, and not from the heart.

The hurry I am at present in will not permit me to be so particular, as I wished to have been. Nor would the limits of a letter suffice to describe the difficulty which I fear might occur in conferring important offices upon persons, however meritorious they may really be, who have resided but a little while, and are consequently but little known in America. A single disgust excited in a particular State on this account, might, perhaps, raise a flame of opposition that could not easily, if ever, be extinguished. For the fact, I apprehend, will be found to be, that there will be at least a hundred competitors for every office of any kind of importance. Indeed, the number of offices will, in our (economical management of the affairs of the Republic, be much fewer, as I conceive, and the pretensions of those who may wish to occupy them much more forcible; than many well informed men have imagined. In all events, so much I can with truth declare, that several of the candidates, who have already come forward, have claims to the public attention and gratitude, which cannot be set aside without a palpable act of injustice. Some of them are men of

unquestionable talents, who have *wasted* the flower of their lives, in the civil or military service of their Country: men who have materially injured their properties, and excluded themselves from obtaining a subsistence for their families by the professions they were accustomed to pursue. There are some, I may add, who have shed their blood and deserved all that a grateful Country has to bestow. Nor are they, in my judgment, incapable of reflecting lustre on the most dignified Stations.

From this simple, but just state of circumstances, you will perceive, my dear Sir, on what an ocean of troubles I am likely to be embarked. In the meantime, you will suffer me to observe, that, from the very satisfactory accounts I have been able to obtain of your Son's abilities, accomplishments and dispositions, I am thoroughly persuaded he is capable of discharging the duties of a public office, with the greatest reputation to himself and advantage to the government which might employ him. But, however, I may be convinced of his merits; or, however, I may be disposed to serve him: you will be able to comprehend, from what I have already said, a part of the serious obstacles which will oppose themselves to the success of any Candidate, so partially known in America as he is. I have no

conception of a more delicate task, than that, which is imposed by the Constitution on the Executive. It is the nature of Republicans, who are nearly in a state of equality, to be extremely jealous as to the disposal of all honorary or lucrative appointments. Perfectly convinced I am, that, if injudicious or unpopular

measures should be taken by the Executive under the New Government with regards to appointments, the Government itself would be in the utmost danger of being utterly subverted by those measures. So necessary is it, at this crisis, to conciliate the good will of the People: and so impossible is it, in my judgment, to build the edifice of public happiness, but upon their affections.

Your good sense and native candour must serve me as an apology, for being thus explicit. Mrs. Washington and the family desire their most respectful compliments may be presented to you. I add no more than that you may ever count upon the friendly Sentiments and best wishes of him who has the pleasure to subscribe himself. With real esteem etc.<sup>88</sup>

---

88. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To SAMUEL VAUGHAN, JUNIOR**

Mount Vernon, March 21, 1789.

Sir: In acknowledging the letter, which I had the pleasure to receive from you by the last mail, I should have thought myself obliged, from principles of politeness and regard for you as well as from motives of justice to myself, to have entered into a full explanation of my general sentiments and feelings on the subject; did not the enclosed letter for your father (which is left open for your inspection, and which you will be pleased to have closed and forwarded) explain them as fully as I am at leisure to do at this time.

In case it should be my unavoidable fortune to occupy the chair of government, I may be under the necessity of adopting a system of public conduct altogether from reasons of State: but I pray you will be persuaded that my inclinations for paying particular attention to distinguished talents and merits can never fail of being sincere; and that in all personal consideration I shall remain

With Sentiments of the highest regard etc.<sup>90</sup>

90. Both of these letters were put under cover of a brief note to John Vaughan for him to forward. Copies of these letters and note are in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To EDWARD STEVENS**

Mount Vernon, March 21, 1789.

Dear Sir: The letter which you was pleased to address to me, on the 16th. of this month, has been duly received; and in the acknowledgment thereof, I find myself at liberty only to make a few observations on the general subject of appointments to offices under the New Government. Should it inevitably prove my lot to hold the Chief Magistracy, I have determined to go into office, without being under any pre-engagements, to any person, of any nature whatsoever. This answer I have already often given, and especially to some very important applications for the Naval Office in the district of Norfolk. And this line of conduct I have observed, because I thought (if I should be in the predicament before alluded to) the justice I owed to my own reputation, and the justice I owed to my Country required that I should be perfectly free to act, while in office, with a supreme and undeviating regard for individual merit, and the public good.

Altho' I can easily conceive that the general principles on which nominations ought in good policy and equity to be made may be easily ascertained still I cannot possibly form a conception of a more delicate and arduous task, than the particular application of those principles to practice.

Few reasonable Men will, I suppose, deny that the fitness of characters to fill offices and the comparative validity of the claims of different Candidates, together with, perhaps, some political considerations of a local nature, are objects principally to be attended to in making those nominations: yet every reasonable Man must conclude, that with the best possible intentions, it will be impossible to give universal satisfaction. You will perceive these observations are not designed to apply to any particular case; from them, however, you may collect my manner of thinking on the subject.

As from your known respectability in the State it was probably in your power to have obtained the office at Norfolk, on the resignation of Colo. Parker; and as the circumstances of actual occupancy would undoubtedly have brought a great additional weight to your other claims, I almost wonder you had not taken that previous, and, apparently, essentially necessary step. For it appears to me, it will be a most unpleasant thing to turn out of office one man, against whom there is no charge of

misconduct; merely to make room for another, however conspicuous his integrity and abilities may be.

In the meantime these considerations are barely suggested, with all that frankness which I trust would be expected from me, and under all the impressions of real respect and esteem with which, I am etc.<sup>89</sup>

---

89. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To GOVERNOR GEORGE CLINTON**

Mount Vernon, March 25, 1789.

Dear Sir: With very great sensibility I have received the honor of your letter dated the 10th instant, and consider the kind and obliging invitation to your house, until suitable accommodations can be provided for the President, as a testimony of your friendship and politeness, of which I shall ever retain a grateful sense. But if it should be my lot (for Heaven knows it is not my wish) to appear again in a public *Station*, I shall make it a point to take hired lodgings, or Rooms in a Tavern until some House can be provided. Because it would be wrong, in my real Judgment, to impose such a burden on any private family, as must unavoidably be occasioned by my company: and because I think it would be generally expected, that, being supported by the public at large, I should not be burdensome to Individuals. With respect to the other part of your letter, which is expressive of a wish to be apprized of the time of my approach to the City, I can assure you, with the utmost sincerity, that no reception can be so congenial to my feelings as a quiet entry devoid of ceremony, be the manner of it what it may. I have the honor to be &c.<sup>96</sup>

---

96. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **\*To JAMES MADISON**

Mount Vernon, March 30, 1789.

My dear Sir: I have been favored with your Letter of the 19th; by which it appears that a quorum of Congress was hardly to be expected until the beginning of the *past* week. As this delay must be very irksome to the attending Members, and every days continuance of it (before the Government



is in operation) will be more sensibly felt; I am resolved, no interruption shall proceed from me that can well be avoided (after notice of the Election is announced); and therefore take the liberty of requesting the favor of you to engage Lodgings for me previous to my arrival. Colo. Humphreys, I presume, will be of my party; and Mr. Lear who has already lived three years with me as a private Secretary, will accompany, or preceed me in the stage.

On the subject of lodgings I will frankly declare, I mean to go into none but hired ones. If these cannot be had tolerably convenient (I am not very nice) I would take rooms in the most decent Tavern, till a house can be provided for the more permanent reception of the President. I have already declined a very polite and pressing offer from the Governor, to lodge at his house till a place could be prepared for me; after which should any other of a similar nature be made, there would be no propriety in the acceptance. But as you are fully acquainted with sentiments on this subject, I shall only add, that as I mean

to avoid private families on the one hand, so on another, I am not desirous of being placed *early* in a situation for entertaining. Therefore, hired (private) lodgings would not only be more agreeable to my own wishes, but, possibly, more consistent with the dictates of sound policy. For, as it is my wish and intention to conform to the public desire and expectation, with respect to the style proper for the Chief Magistrate to live in, it might be well to know (as far as the nature of the case will admit) what these are before he enters upon it.

After all, something may perhaps have been decided upon with respect to the accommodations of the President, before this letter wd. have reached you that may render this application nugatory. If otherwise, I will sum up all my wishes in one word, and that is to be placed in an independent situation, with the prospect I have alluded to, before me. With strong, and Affectionate friendship I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

**\*To THE ACTING SECRETARY AT WAR**

Mount Vernon, April 1, 1789.

My dear Sir: The Mail of the 30th. brought me your favor of the 23d. By which, and the regular information you have had the goodness to transmit of the state of things in New York, I feel myself very much obliged, and thank you accordingly.

I feel for those Members of the new Congress, who, hitherto, have given an unavailing attendance at the theatre of business. For myself, the delay may be compared to a reprieve; for in confidence I assure *you*, with the *world* it would obtain *little credit*, that my movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution: so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an Ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill, abilities and inclination which is necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible, that I am embarking the voice of my Countrymen and a good name of my own, on this voyage, but what returns will be made for them, Heaven alone can foretell. Integrity and firmness is all I can promise; these, be the voyage long or short, never shall forsake me although I may be deserted by all men. For of the consolations which are to be derived from these (under any

circumstances) the world cannot deprive me. With best wishes for Mrs. Knox, and sincere friendship for yourself etc.

[MS.H.S.]

## To WILLIAM MILNOR

Mount Vernon, April 1, 1789.

Sir: I have been duly favored with your letter of the 26th Ultimo, and had before seen a letter from you to Mr. Lund Washington on the same subject. In answer to them both, I can say no more to you at present than what I have already invariably said to many, very many others. that if it should be my lot to administer the government, I am resolved to enter upon my office totally free from every engagement whatsoever, and that in all appointments to offices as far as my agency in the matter is required, one *only* rule shall guide me, and that is to consult the fitness of characters and the public good: for however strong my friendships, or however great my inclination towards individuals may be, they will never make me swerve knowingly from this rule. I do not say this as any discouragement to your application, on the contrary it would give me great pleasure to see you placed in a situation agreeable to your wishes and merits. As a step towards it, (your conduct and walk of life having for many years been unknown to me) I would advise you to obtain the most ample testimony of your sobriety, Industry &c. from the wellknown and respectable characters of your City; this would be a proper ground for recommendation to any office to be built on. I am etc.<sup>14</sup>

---

14. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**\*To JAMES McHENRY**

Mount Vernon, April 1, 1789.

Dear Sir: With a heart duly impressed with a sense of the kind invitation you have been pleased to give me to your House I received your favor of the 29th. ult, and pray you to accept my thanks for this farther testimony of your polite attention to me; but at the sametime I offer you this tribute of gratitude, I must beg your excuse for not complying with the request. For, however pleasing it might be to me, on any other occasion, to render this proof of my regard for you, I cannot consistently with my ideas of propriety (under the existing circumstances) consent to give so much trouble in a private family.

The party that may possibly attend me, the crowd that always gather on novel occasions, and the compliment of visiting (which some may incline to pay to a new character) all contribute to render a public house the fittest place for scenes of bustle and trouble.

Mrs. Washington joins me in compliments and best wishes, and with sentiments of very great esteem etc.<sup>13</sup>

---

13. From the *McHenry Photostats* in the Library of Congress.

**To THE ACTING SECRETARY AT WAR**

Mount Vernon, April 10, 1789.

My dear Sir: The cloth and Buttons which accompanied your favor of the 30th. Ult, came safe by Colo. Hanson; and really do credit to the manufactures of this Country. As it requires Six more of the large (engraved) button to trim the Coat in the manner I wash it to be,<sup>30</sup> I would thank you, my good Sir, for procuring that number and retaining them in your hands until my arrival at New York.

Not to contemplate (though it is a serious object) the loss which you say the General Government will sustain in the article of Impost, the stupor, or listlessness with which our public measures seem to be pervaded, is, to me, matter of deep regret. Indeed it has so strange an appearance that I cannot but wonder how men who solicit public confidence or who are even prevailed upon to accept of it can reconcile such conduct with their own feelings of propriety.

The delay is inauspicious to say the best of it, and the World must condemn it.

With sentiments of the sincerest friendship, I am etc.

PS. The advices by the Mail of this Evening will, surely, inform us of a Quoram in both Houses of Congress.

[MS.H.S.]

---

30. This was the suit, of plain brown cloth made by a manufactory in the vicinity of Boston, which Washington wore when inaugurated the first President of the United States.

---

63. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On May 3 Lear wrote to Clement Biddle, for the President, that "He would thank you to propose it to Will to return to Mount Vernon when he can be removed for he cannot be of any service here, and perhaps will require a person to attend upon him constantly, if he should incline to return to Mount Vernon you will be so kind as to have him sent in the first Vessel that sails for Alexandria after he can be removed with safety, but if he is still anxious to come on here the President would gratify him Altho' he will be troublesome. He has been an old and faithful Servant this is enough for the President to gratify him in every reasonable wish." A copy of Lear's letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On May 4 Washington wrote to Mrs. Annis Boudinot Stockton, thanking her, quite briefly, for another of her poems. A copy of this is in the "Letter Book." Mrs. Stockton's letter of May 1 and the poem is in the *Washington Papers*.

On this same day (May 4) Washington also wrote briefly to Anthony Wayne, thanking him for his friendly sentiments. A copy of this letter is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To THOMAS RANDALL**

New York, May 2, 1789.

Sir: Desirous of being more particular in expressing my acknowledgments for the elegant Barge which was presented to me on my arrival in this City, than I could be at that moment; I must now request that you will be pleased to offer my best thanks to the Gentlemen who were owners of it,

and assure them in my name that I consider myself much honored by their polite attention. I am, etc.<sup>63</sup>

**\*To EDWARD RUTLEDGE**

New York, May 5, 1789.

My dear Sir: I cannot fail of being much pleased with the friendly part you take in every thing which concerns me; and particularly with the just scale on which you estimate this last great sacrifice which I consider myself as having made for the good of my Country. When I had judged, upon the best appreciation I was able to form of the circumstances which related to myself, that it was my duty to embark again on the tempestuous and uncertain Ocean of public life, I gave up all expectations of private happiness in this world. You know, my dear Sir, I had concentrated all my schemes, all my views, all my wishes, within the narrow circle of domestic enjoyment. Though I flatter myself the world will do me the justice to believe, that, at my time of life and in my circumstances, nothing but a conviction of duty could have induced me to depart from my resolution of remaining in retirement; yet I greatly apprehend that my Countrymen will expect too much from me. I fear, if the issue of public measures should not correspond with their sanguine expectations, they will turn the extravagant (and I may say undue) praises which they are heaping upon me at this moment, into equally extravagant (though I will fondly hope unmerited) censures.

So much is expected, so many untoward circumstances may intervene, in such a new and critical situation, that I feel an insuperable diffidence in my own abilities. I feel, in the execution of the duties of my arduous Office, how much I shall stand in need of the countenance and aid of every friend to myself, of every friend to the Revolution, and of every lover of good Government. I thank you, my dear Sir, for your affectionate expressions on this point.

I anticipate that one of the most difficult and delicate parts of the duty of my Office will be that which relates to nominations for appointments. I receive with the more satisfaction the strong testimonials in behalf of Mr. Hall<sup>64</sup> because I hope they will tend to supercede the difficulty in this instance. Though from a system which I have prescribed to myself I can say nothing decisive on particular appointments; yet I may be allowed to observe in general, that nothing could be more agreeable to me than to have one Candidate brought forward for every Office of such clear pretensions as to secure him against competition.

Mrs. Washington is not here, but is shortly expected; on her arrival I will offer the Compliments of Mrs. Rutledge and yourself to her. In the meantime, I pray you to believe that, I am with sentiments of the purest esteem and highest consideration My dear Sir Yr. etc.<sup>65</sup>

---

64. George Abbott Hall. He was State collector of customs at Charleston, S.C., and wished to be continued in that office under the United States.

---

65. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

### To JAMES BOWDOIN

New York, May 9, 1789.

Sir: Since my arrival in this place I have been honored with your letters of the 18th of Feby. and 24th of April.

To meet the congratulations and assurances of support from those Characters whose opinions I revere, will be of no small service in enabling me to overcome the diffidence which I have in my own abilities, to execute properly the important and untried task which my Country has assigned me.

No part of my duty will be more delicate, and, in many instances, more unpleasing, than that of nominating or appointing persons to offices. It will undoubtedly often happen that there will be several candidates for the same office whose pretensions, abilities and integrity may be nearly equal, and who will come forward so equally supported in every respect as almost to require the aid of supernatural intuition to fix upon the right. I shall, however, in all events, have the satisfaction to reflect that I entered upon my administration unconfined by a single engagement, uninfluenced by any ties of blood or friendship, and with the best intentions and fullest determination to nominate to office those persons only, who, upon every consideration, were the most deserving, and who would probably execute their several functions to the interest and credit of the American Union, if such characters could be found by my exploring every avenue of information respecting their merits and pretensions that it was in my power to obtain.

With great respect etc.<sup>73</sup>

---

73. In the writing of Tobias Lear. This letter is entered in the "Letter Book" as bearing date of May 6.

On May 7 Washington had written practically this same letter to Nathaniel Gorham, a copy of which is in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

[MS.H.S.]

**To DOCTOR WILLIAM SHIPPEN**

New York, May 7, 1789.

Dear Sir: The new and busy scenes in which I have been occupied since I received your favor of the 6th. of last month, containing an extract of a letter from your son, will plead my excuse for not having acknowledged the receipt of it at an earlier day.

I have now to express my satisfaction for this mark of your attention, and to thank you for the interest you take in the honor which has lately been done me. I will only add that the style of your son's letter is highly pleasing, and that the subject matter of it evinces he has not mis-employed his time since he has been absent from America. I am etc.<sup>68</sup>

---

68. In the writing of Tobias Lear in the Shippen Deposit in the Library of Congress.

**To ABRAHAM BALDWIN**

New York, May 71, 1789.

Sir: I have duly received your letter of the 30th. of April, containing the resignation of your seat at the general Board of Commissioners for finally adjusting all accounts between the United States and the individual States: and shall cause it to be filed in the proper office as soon as the necessary arrangement of Departments shall have been made. I am etc.<sup>69</sup>

---

69. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To THE ACTING SECRETARY AT WAR**

United States, May 9, 1789.

Sir: The enclosed papers relative to a treaty with the Cherokee Indians were put into my hands: and as I understand that matters of this kind have hitherto been considered as belonging to the department of the Secretary of War to examine and report thereon, and knowing that you have others of a similar nature now in your hands I would wish you to make a summary report on the whole as soon as may be.<sup>72</sup> I am etc.

---

72. The "Letter Book" gives Knox the title of Acting Secretary of War. He was, of course, a hold-over from the Continental Congress, and was commissioned as Secretary of War of the United States Sept. 12, 1789.

### To JAMES WILSON

United States, May 9, 1789.

Dear Sir: The new and busy scenes in which I have been constantly engaged since the receipt of your letter of the 21st. Ultimo,<sup>74</sup> will, I trust, apologize for my not having acknowledged it at an earlier period.

To you, my dear Sir, and others who know me, I presume it will be unnecessary for me to say that I have entered upon my office without the constraint of a single *engagement*, and that I never wish to depart from that line of conduct which will always leave me at full liberty to act in a manner which is befitting an impartial and disinterested Magistrate. I am etc.<sup>75</sup>

---

74. Wilson applied for appointment of Chief Justice of the United States. His letter is in the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

---

75. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### To THOMAS McKEAN

United States, May 9, 1789.

Sir: I have duly received your letter of the 27th. of April; and as the contents are of a nature which do not require a particular answer, I shall only acknowledge the receipt of it;<sup>76</sup> observing, at the same



time, that, the resolution which I have formed, and from which I never will depart, will always leave me at full liberty to act upon every subject which may come before me without the embarrassments of any previous *engagements* . With great esteem etc.<sup>77</sup>

---

76. McKean's application for an appointment in the judicial department of the Government (April 27) is in the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

---

77. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To WILLIAM HEATH

United States, May 9, 1789.

Sir: The numerous congratulations which I have received from Public Bodies and respectable individuals since my appointment to my present station, are truly grateful, as they hold forth the strongest assurances of support to the Government as well as a warm attachment to myself. It is from the good dispositions of the people at large, from the influence of respectable Characters, and from the patriotic co-operation of a wise and virtuous legislature, more than from any abilities of mine that I can promise success to my administration. The kind interposition of Providence which has been so often manifested in the affairs of this country, must naturally lead us to look up to that divine source for light and direction in this new and untried Scene.

I thank you, Sir, most sincerely for the good wishes and friendly gratulations contained in your letter of the 2nd. of April, as well as for the offer which you make of your services if your country should require them.<sup>78</sup> There is I believe, no part of my administration in which I shall find myself more embarrassed than that of nominating persons to offices. The pretensions will be so numerous, and many of them so nearly equal that it will require no small degree of discernment and investigation to hit upon the right. I shall, however, in all events,

---

78. Heath applied for an appointment, civil or military. His letter is in the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

have the consolation of reflecting that I entered upon my duty without the restriction of a single engagement, and, if I know myself, under no partial influences. I shall leave no means in my power unessayed to find out the most deserving and best qualified persons to fill the several departments which it falls to my lot to supply. With very great esteem etc.<sup>79</sup>

---

79. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To GOVERNOR JOHN HANCOCK**

United States, May 9, 1789.

Sir: I am taking the earliest occasion of acknowledging the receipt of the letter, which you did me the favor to address to me by Mr. Allen; and to thank you for your kind congratulations on my appointment to the Presidency of the United States.

Mrs. Washington is not here but is expected in the course of this month, on her arrival I shall not fail of executing the friendly commission of Mrs. Hancock and yourself.

In tendering my respectful compliments to both, and in hopes that the present favorable season may greatly accelerate the recovery of your health, I remain with the highest respect and consideration Sir, etc.

P.S. Since writing the above, I have been honored with your Excellency's favor of the 2d. enclosing an Account of the Exports and clearances from the port of Boston, for the years 1787 and 8 for which I pray you to accept my best thanks.<sup>80</sup>

---

80. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On May 9 Washington received and answered an address from the mayor, aldermen, and commonalty of the city of New York, both of which are entered in the "Letter Book." In his reply Washington wrote, in part: "I am far from claiming any merit for retiring in the manner I did from a military command to the shade of private life....No circumstance, in my conception, can be more consolatory to a public man...than a knowledge that his countrymen are disposed to consider the motives of his conduct with that liberality, which is reciprocally necessary for all, who are subject to the frailties of human nature...the partiality of my Countrymen in my favor has induced them to expect too much from the exertions of an individual. It is from their co-operation alone, I derive all my expectations of success."

**To PHILIP SCHUYLER**

United States, May 9, 1789.

Dear Sir: I yesterday had the pleasure to receive your favor of the 2d instant, and must beg you to accept of my most grateful acknowledgments for your good wishes and kind gratulations upon my entrance on a new and arduous task.

It is only from the assurances of support which, I have received from the respectable and worthy characters in every part of the Union, that I am enabled to overcome the diffidence which I have in my own abilities to execute my great and important trust to the best interest of your country. An honest zeal, and an unremitting attention to the interest of United America is all that I dare promise.

The good dispositions which seem at present to pervade every class of people afford reason for your observation that the clouds which have long darkened our political hemisphere are now dispersing, and that America will soon feel the effects of her natural advantages. That invisible hand which has so often interposed to save our Country from impending destruction, seems in no instance to have been more remarkably excited than in that of disposing the people of this extensive Continent to adopt, in a peaceable manner, a Constitution, which if well administered, bids fair to make America a happy nation.

With very sincere regard, etc.<sup>80</sup>

---

80. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On May 9 Washington received and answered an address from the mayor, aldermen, and commonalty of the city of New York, both of which are entered in the "Letter Book." In his reply Washington wrote, in part: "I am far from claiming any merit for retiring in the manner I did from a military command to the shade of private life....No circumstance, in my conception, can be more consolatory to a public man...than a knowledge that his countrymen are disposed to consider the motives of his conduct with that liberality, which is reciprocally necessary for all, who are subject to the frailties of human nature...the partiality of my Countrymen in my favor has induced them to expect too much from the exertions of an individual. It is from their co-operation alone, I derive all my expectations of success."

**To WILLIAM FITZHUGH<sup>90</sup>**

United States, May 14, 1789.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 26th of April was handed to me but a few days ago. Your congratulations, and the good wishes of yourself, Mrs. Fitzhugh and your family deserve, and receive my warmest acknowledgments.

Amidst the numerous applications which are made for offices I shall leave no means in my power untried to gain such information and knowledge of characters and pretensions as will enable me to nominate those who, upon every consideration, are the most proper to fill them; for I have entered upon the duties of my station unconfined by any engagements, and uninfluenced by any ties.

With very great regard etc.<sup>91</sup>

---

90. Of Patuxent, Md.

---

91. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To GEORGE PLATER.**

United States, May 14, 1789.

Dear Sir: I have received your letter of the 29th of April, and must beg you to accept of my best thanks for your kind gratulations and good wishes.

I foresaw the numerous applications which would be made for nominations to offices, and readily conceived that amidst the variety of candidates, it would be one of the most delicate and difficult duties of the President to disseminate those characters which, upon every account, were best fitted to fill the several offices. I have entered into Public life without the restraint of blood or friendship: I shall, therefore, use my best endeavors to find out such persons as are most suitable, on every account, to fill the respective offices, and such only shall I nominate.

With my compliments to Mrs. Plater and your family, and with very great regard etc.<sup>91</sup>

---

91. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To JOSEPH JONES**

New York, May 14, 1789.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 21st Ulto. came duly to hand, and should have received an earlier acknowledgment had not the new and busy scenes in which I have been engaged since my arrival in this place, rendered it impossible for me to pay that early attention to the favors of my friends which I should be pleased to do.

The numerous and friendly congratulations which I have received from respectable characters in every part of the Union are truly pleasing to me; not only on account of their discovering a warm attachment to my person, but because they convey the most flattering idea of the good dispositions of the people in the several States, and the strongest assurances of support to the Government. It affords me likewise no small satisfaction to find that my friends have done justice to the motives which again brought me into Public Life.

Under all these circumstances I shall feel a degree of confidence in discharging the duties of my administration, which a consciousness alone of the purity and rectitude of my intentions could not have inspired me with.

Your observations upon the necessity there is for good dispositions to prevail among the Gentlemen of Congress, are extremely just; and hitherto, everything seems to promise that the good effects which are expected from an accommodating and conciliating spirit in that body, will not be frustrated.

That part of the President's duty which obliges him to nominate persons for offices is the most delicate, and in many instances will be, to me, the most unpleasing; for it may frequently happen that there will be several applicants for the same office, whose merits and pretensions are so nearly equal that it will almost require the aid of supernatural intuition to fix upon the right. I shall, however, in all events, have the consolation of knowing that I entered upon my office unconfined by engagements, and uninfluenced by any ties; and that no means in my power will be left untried to find out, and nominate those characters who will discharge the duties of their respective offices to the best interest and highest credit of the American Union.

I cannot close this letter, my dear Sir, without thanking you very sincerely for your friendly sentiments and good wishes; and beg you will be assured that I am etc.<sup>93</sup>

---

93. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

[N.Y.P.L.]

**To GOVERNOR BEVERLEY RANDOLPH**

New York, May 16, 1789.

Sir: A letter of the 4th instant from Lt: Governor Wood<sup>94</sup> has been received with its inclosures, containing the information of some murders committed by the Indians on the 23d of last month at Dunkard Creek which runs into the Monongahala River.

It is with great concern that I learn this circumstance, as a treaty has been lately concluded by the Governor of the western territory with the Wiandot, Delawar, Ottawa, Chippawa, Pattawatima, and Sac nations of Indians, North West of the Ohio.

It is most probable that the recent murders have been committed by a party from the remnants of the Shawanese tribe, who are joined by a few renegado Cherokees.

The Governor of the western territory,<sup>95</sup> who is here, will soon return to the frontiers, and he will, in conjunction with the commanding officer of the troops, take such measures, with the said Shawanese and other refractory tribes, as the occasion may require, and the public situation admit.

It would be highly proper, in future, in case of depredations south of the Ohio, that information be communicated as early as possible to the nearest post of the troops stationed on the Ohio, in order if possible that the banditii be intercepted. I have the honor etc.<sup>96</sup>

[H.S.P.]

---

94. James Wood, Lieutenant Governor of Virginia.

---

95. Arthur St. Clair.

---

96. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

**To JAMES KELSO**

United States, May 21, 1789.

Sir: I have to inform you in consequence of your Memorial,<sup>3</sup> that I cannot undertake to make nominations for appointments,<sup>4</sup> or give indications of patronage in any instance, before offices are created. Nor will it be of any use, for any Candidate to remain in this place, for the sake of making personal applications to me. Facts and testimonials will alone be of avail, and I shall endeavor upon a general view of circumstances to act upon them accordingly. I am etc.<sup>2</sup>

---

3. In the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

---

4. Kelso had applied for appointment of Controller of Customs of Baltimore, Md.

---

2. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To MARY WOOSTER<sup>97</sup>**

New York, May 21, 1789.

Madam: I have duly received your affecting letter, dated the 8th day of this Month.<sup>98</sup> Sympathizing with you, as I do, in the great misfortunes, which have befallen your family in consequence of the War; my feelings as an individual would forcibly prompt me to do every thing in my power to repair those misfortunes. But as a public man, acting only with a reference to the public good, I must be allowed to decide upon all points of my duty without consulting my private inclinations and wishes. I must be permitted, with the best lights I can obtain, and upon a general view of characters and circumstances, to nominate such persons alone to offices, as, in my judgment, shall be the best qualified to discharge the functions of the departments to which they shall be appointed.

Hitherto I have given no decisive answers to the applications of any candidates whatsoever. Nor would it be proper for me before offices shall be created, and before I can have a general knowledge of the Competitors for them, to say any thing that might be construed as intended to encourage or discourage the hopes which individuals may have formed of success. I only wish (so far as my agency in this business is concerned) that Candidates for offices would save

---

97. Widow of Brig. Gen. David Wooster.

---

98. Mrs. Wooster's letter, requesting for the appointment of her son Thomas, is in the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

themselves the trouble and consequent expense of personal attendance. All that I require, is the name and such testimonials with respect to abilities, integrity and fitness as it may be in the power of the several applicants to produce: beyond this, nothing with *me* is necessary, or will be of any avail to them in my decisions. In the mean time, I beg you will be persuaded, Madam, that, let the result be whatsoever it may, I can have no interest to promote but that of the public; and that I remain in all personal considerations, with the highest respect, Madam etc.<sup>99</sup>

---

99. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To CAPTAINS DE MOLITOE AND VULTEIUS**

United States, May 21, 1789.

Gentlemen: Your letter of the 18th instant<sup>1</sup> setting forth your distressed condition, and requesting some pecuniary assistance, has been put into my hands.

The distresses of my fellow creatures are never known to me without giving pain, to whatever Nation or Country they belong; and happy should I be could I relieve the wants and necessities of every one; but, Gentlemen, that is out of my power, and there are thousands of my own Countrymen whose misfortunes should certainly claim my first attention; but even here I am unable to gratify my feelings, for I receive no emolument for my public services, and my private fortune would be totally inadequate to the numerous applications which are made to me for assistance. I presume, therefore, you will not think it proceeds from a disinclination to help the needy, or from a pointed discrimination between my own Countrymen and foreigners that I do not comply with your request. I am etc.<sup>2</sup>

---

1. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

---

2. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To JAMES WARREN**



United States, May 23, 1789.

Sir: I have duly received your very friendly letter of the 2nd Instant, and beg you to accept of my sincere acknowledgment and best thanks for the kind congratulations, and good wishes which were contained in it.

It affords me peculiar satisfaction to see the Union of sentiment which seems to prevail in favor of our new system of Government. I find that the good and respectable characters from every quarter are determined to give it their countenance and support, notwithstanding some of them apprehended that evils might arise from particular parts of it.

Those who opposed the Constitution before its adoption, from principle, were pretty generally convinced of the necessity there was for a change in our former confederation, but its being accepted by so large a part of the community, the harmony which prevails in the legislature and the prospect of having those apprehensions done away by some alteration, have induced them to say with you, that "it is the duty of every good citizen to rejoice in every measure calculated to carry it into operation agreeably to the principle on which it was adopted."

It gives me no small pleasure to find that former friendships have not been destroyed by a difference of opinion

on this great political point, it is a proof of the good disposition which govern the people of this Country, and which, if properly improved will make us a happy people.

With great regard etc.<sup>6</sup>

---

6. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To ELÉONOR FRANÇOIS ÉLIE, COMTE DE MOUSTIER**

(Confidential)

New York, May 25, 1789.

Sir: What circumstances there may be existing between our two nations, to which you allude<sup>10</sup> on account of their peculiarity, I know not. But as those nations are happily connected in the strictest ties of Amity, not less by inclination and interest, than by the solemnity of a Treaty; and as the United

States are too remote from Europe to take any share in the local politics of that continent; I had concluded, that Commerce was the only subject of Negotiations, which could, at present, be very interesting to the Inhabitants of the two Countries.

In two letters, which I had the pleasure of writing to you before I returned into public life, I stated (if I remember rightly, for I have not the copies of the letters with me) that I was so little acquainted with *commercial affairs*, that I should very much distrust my own judgment, even in the opinions which I might be obliged to hazard in treating casually of them. *This fact*, if there had been no other circumstance that merited a consideration, *would be a conclusive reason for preventing me individually from entering upon any kind of Negotiations on that subject*. For, while I find myself incompetent to it, I really believe that much reciprocal advantage might be acquired if that subject could be candidly and intelligently managed. This I should hope, too, might be the case; and so far shall I be from throwing any obstacles in the way, that I shall certainly take a great pleasure in removing (so far as lays in my power) such as may occur.

---

10. Moustier's letter (May 19) claimed the privilege of dealing directly with the President in diplomatic affairs. (See also his letter (May 1), which should have been dated June 1, in answer to that from Washington, both of which are in the *Washington Papers*.)

Every one who has any knowledge of my manner of acting in public life, will be persuaded that I am not accustomed to impede the despatch or frustrate the success of business, by a ceremonious attention to idle forms. Any person, of that description, will also be satisfied that I should not readily consent to lose one of the most important functions of my office, for the sake of preserving an imaginary dignity. But, perhaps, if there are rules of proceeding, which have originated from the wisdom of statesmen and are sanctioned by the common consent of Nations, it would not be prudent for a young state to dispense with them altogether, at least, without some substantial cause for so doing. I have myself been induced to think, possibly from the habits of experience, that in general the best mode of conducting negotiations, the detail and progress of which might be liable to accidental mistakes or unintentional misrepresentations, is by writing. This mode, if I was obliged myself to negotiate with any one, I should still pursue. I have, however, been taught to believe, that there is, in most polished nations, a system established, with regard to the foreign as well as the other great Departments, which, from the utility, the necessity, and the reason of the thing, provides that business should be digested and prepared by the Heads of those departments.

The impossibility that one man should be able to perform all the great business of the State, I take to have been the reason for instituting the great Departments, and appointing officers therein, to assist the supreme Magistrate in discharging the duties of his trust.

And, perhaps, I may be allowed to say of myself, that the supreme Magistrate of no State can have a greater variety of important business to perform in person, than I have at this moment. Very many things will doubtless occur to you, Sir, as being incident to the office of President in the commencement of the Government, which cannot be done by the intervention of a third person. You will give me leave to say likewise, that no third person (were there a disposition for it) shall ever have it in his power to erect a wall between me and the Diplomatic Corps; that is to say, to prevent necessary communications. Nor has anybody insinuated that it would be beneath the dignity of a President of the United States occasionally to transact business with a foreign Minister. But in what light the public might view the establishment of a precedent for negotiating the business of a Department, without any agency of the Head of the Department who was appointed for that very purpose, I do not at present pretend to determine: Nor whether a similar practice, in that case, must not of right be extended hereafter to all Diplomatic characters of the same rank.

Here you will be pleased to observe, Sir, that I am writing as General Washington to the Count de Moustiers. Happy am I that my regard for yourself and your Nation is so far from being equivocal, that I have had several occasions of making it known to you, both in conversation and writing. And I hope you will consider this Confidential letter as an evidence of the extreme regret which I should feel, in being obliged to decline any propositions, as to the mode of doing business, from a

person who has so many titles to my esteem as the Count de Moustiers.

I will only add, that, under my present impressions, I cannot persuade myself, that I should be justifiable in deviating essentially from established forms. With the highest sentiments of esteem,  
&c.<sup>11</sup>

---

11. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To CALEB GIBBS

New York, May 26, 1789.

Dear Sir: I have received your letter respecting yourself;<sup>12</sup> and, at present, can only inform you, that I hold myself altogether disengaged from making any promises or giving any encouragement to any Candidates whatsoever. In this situation I shall continue, until the offices shall have been created by Congress, for which it may be necessary to make appointments, Whatever may be my private inclinations and feelings, it will then be my endeavour to find out and nominate such men

as shall seem to be best calculated and best entitled in every respect to fill those offices, according to the clearest information I can obtain, and the most unbiassed judgment I can exercise on the subject. In the mean time, I request you will do me the justice to believe that I am, in all personal considerations, and with very great regard etc.<sup>13</sup>

---

12. Gibbs wrote two letters in 1789, one March 11 and the other May 25, applying for an appointment. Both of these letters are in the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

On May 26 the general assembly of Presbyterian churches in the United States, meeting in Philadelphia, sent an address to Washington. His answer, which is undated in the "Letter Book," follows immediately after the copy of the address. In it he wrote in part:

"While I reiterate the professions of my dependence upon Heaven as the source of all public and private blessings; I will observe that the general prevalence of piety, philanthropy, honesty, industry, and œconomy seems, in the ordinary course of human affairs, particularly necessary for advancing and confirming the happiness of our country. While all men within our territories are protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of their consciences; it is rationally to be expected from them in return, that they will be emulous of evincing the sanctity of their professions by the innocence of their lives and the beneficence of their actions; for no man, who is profligate in his morals, or a bad member of the civil community, can possibly be a true Christian, or a credit to his own religious society.

"I desire you to accept my acknowledgments for your laudable endeavours to render men sober, honest, and good Citizens, and the obedient subjects of a lawful government."

---

13. From a photostat of the original, in the writing of Tobias Lear, kindly furnished by Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N. J.

### **To REVEREND JOHN GABRIEL GEBHARD**

New York, May 26, 1789.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 18th. instant,<sup>14</sup> and thank you very sincerely for your good wishes and favorable sentiments, as well as for the polite offer which you make of rendering me any service in your power while you may be in Europe.

So far as relates to me personally I know nothing, at present, that I wish to have transacted in that part of the world; and as to the offer of your Services to the public, I can only say that when domestic matters are so arranged as to permit the business of foreign departments to come under consideration, such persons will be appointed to transact it as shall be found to have the best pretensions thereto, upon every consideration, and best qualified to do service and credit to their Country. I should be wanting in candour if I said any thing that might induce you to delay or postpone your intended voyage, which you say you would readily do to render any service to your Country. You will therefore, Sir, be directed by your own judgment in the persuit of your plans without suffering them to be interrupted by the expectation of any public employment. I am etc.<sup>15</sup>

---

14. Gebhard's letter, which is in the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress, is dated from Claverack, N. Y.

---

15. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To GOVERNOR GEORGE WALTON<sup>16</sup>**

United States, May 29, 1789.

Sir: I have received by Colonel Gunn<sup>17</sup> your honors letters of the 11th and 15th of March, and the enclosures therein contained respecting the conduct of Joseph Martin Esqr. late agent of the United States to the Cherokee and Chickasaw nations of Indians.

It appears by the Resolve of Congress of the 19th. of June 1789,<sup>18</sup> that the said Joseph Martin was appointed an agent for the Cherokee nation of Indians to continue in office six months, and that on the 20th. of August following his agency was extended to the Chickasaw nation of Indians with the powers described in the act of the 19th. of June.

The period of his service therefore must be considered as having expired on the 19th day of December last.

His conduct will most probably operate to prevent any future confidence in him, or employment in the service of the United States. What further measures it may be proper to take respecting him will be subject of consideration.

The unhappy situation of affairs between the State of Georgia and the Creeks will soon be a subject of deliberation, and I am persuaded will receive all that dispatch that the nature of the case may require, and the circumstances of the Government admit. I have the honor etc.<sup>19</sup>

---

16. Of Georgia.

---

17. Col. James Gunn.

---

18. This date should be 1788.

---

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON**

New York, May 31, 1789.

Sir: The new and busy scenes in which I have been constantly engaged since my arrival in this place, and which will not allow me to pay that pointed attention to the favours of my friends that my inclination would lead me to do, will, I trust, apologize for this late acknowledgment of your letter of the 15th inst.<sup>21</sup>

To you, Sir, and others who know me, I believe, it is unnecessary for me to say, that when I accepted of the important trust committed to my charge by my Country, I gave up every idea of personal gratification that I did not think was compatible with the public good. Under this impression I plainly foresaw that that part of my duty which obliged me to nominate persons to offices, would, in many instances, be the most irksome and unpleasing; for however strong my personal attachment might be to any one, however desirous I might be of giving him a proof of my friendship, and whatever might be his expectations, grounded upon the amity which had subsisted between us, I was fully determined to keep myself free from every engagement that could embarrass me in discharging this part of my administration. I have, therefore, uniformly declined giving any decisive answer to the numerous applications which have been made to me; being resolved, whenever I am called upon to nominate persons for those

---

21. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

offices which may be created, that I will do it with a sole view to the public good, and shall bring forward those who, upon *every* consideration, and from the best information I can obtain, will in my judgment be most likely to answer that great end.

The delicacy with which your letter was written, and your wishes insinuated, did not require me to be thus explicit on this head with you, but the desire which I have that those persons whose good opinion I value should know the principles on which I mean to act in this business, has led me to this full declaration; and I trust, that the truly worthy and respectable characters in this Country will do justice to the motives by which I am actuated in all my public transactions. I have the honor, etc.<sup>22</sup>

---

22. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To ELÉONOR FRANÇOIS ÉLIE, COMTE DE MOUSTIER**

New York, June 2, 1789.

Sir: The sentiments expressed in your letter of yesterday are perfectly consonant to my ideas of propriety. I never doubted that you was animated by motives of the purest regard for my Country and myself. On the other part, you may rest assured, I shall always be happy in occasions of demonstrating the sincerity of friendship for your sovereign and Nation: being with sentiments of real consideration and esteem, Sir, Your etc.<sup>28</sup>

---

28. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **CIRCULAR TO THE SUPREME EXECUTIVES OF THE SEVERAL STATES**

New York, June 8, 1789.

Sir: As Congress have not yet established any Department through which communications can be officially made from the General Government to the Executives of the several States, I do, agreeably to the foregoing Resolution, transmit to your Excellency the enclosed Act, and have the Honor, etc.<sup>32</sup>

[MD.H.S.]

32. From the original sent to the State of Maryland, in which the Resolve of Congress of June 5, 1789, precedes the letter, reciting "That in ten days after the passing of every Act of Congress during the present session, or until some other regulation shall be adopted, twenty two printed Copies thereof, signed by the Secretary of the Senate, and Clerk of the House of Representatives, and certified by them to be true Copies of the Original Acts, be lodged with the President of the United States, and that he be requested to cause to be transmitted two of the said Copies so attested as aforesaid to each of the supreme Executives in the several States." The circular is signed by Washington; but the attestations to the resolve are not, in this instance, as Congress decreed the future printed copies should be, being all in the same clerkly writing.

The letters of transmittal from the President which accompanied the future acts of Congress, which were forwarded to the States, will be omitted from the Bicentennial edition wherever they are merely form letters.

## **To THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

New York, June 8, 1789.

Sir: Although in the present unsettled state of the Executive Departments, under the government of the Union, I do not conceive it expedient to call upon you for information officially; yet I have supposed that some informal communications from the Office of foreign Affairs might neither be improper or unprofitable. For finding myself at this moment less occupied with the duties of my office than I shall probably be at almost any time hereafter; I am desirous of employing myself in obtaining an acquaintance with the real situation of the several great Departments, at the period of my acceding to the administration of the general Government. For this purpose I wish to receive in writing such a clear account of the Department, at the head of which you have been for some years past, as may be sufficient (without overburdening or confusing the mind which has very many objects to claim its attention at the same instant) to impress me with a full, precise, and distinct *general idea* of the affairs of the United States, so far as they are comprehended in, or connected with that Department.

As I am now at leisure to inspect such Papers and Documents as may be necessary to be acted upon hereafter, or as may be calculated to give me an insight into the business and duties of that Department I have thought fit to address this notification to your accordingly?<sup>30</sup> I am &c.<sup>31</sup>



30. This same letter was sent to the Acting Secretary at War and the Board of Treasury, which, with the Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, were officers holding over from the Continental Congress. No replies are now found in the *Washington Papers*; but among the undated manuscripts at the end of the year 1789 are memoranda in Washington's writing headed as follows: "Negotiation with Spain" (13 pp.); "From Mr. Swan's Report" (3 pp.), and "Boundary of Sales of Georgia" to various land companies (2 pp.); "Board of Treasury" (5 pp.): all of which seem to have been compiled from the now missing replies. The great departments of the Government under the Constitution were not created until September, 1789, although the Department of Foreign Affairs was created by the Act of Congress of July 27, 1789. Its name was subsequently changed to that of the Department of State and its head thereafter called the Secretary of State by the Act of Sept. 15, 1789.

On June 8 a letter to the same purport as this one to the Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs was sent to the Acting Postmaster General, whose department was temporarily established by the act of Sept. 22, 1789, and permanently fixed by the act of Feb. 20, 1792.

31. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

#### **To LEONARD DE NEUFVILLE**

New York, June 29, 1789.

Sir: Your letter of the present month and the papers accompanying it have been handed to me since my late indisposition. As all public accounts and matters of a pecuniary nature will come properly under the inspection of the Treasury Department of the United States, I shall, when that department is organized and established, have those papers laid before the Secretary thereof, and so far as my official agency may be necessary in the business it will meet with no delay. I am etc.<sup>40</sup>

40. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

#### **To THE ACTING POSTMASTER GENERAL**

New York, July 3, 1789.

Sir: Your letter of the 27th of June, together with the amount of receipts and expenditures of the General Post Office of the United States from 1782 to 1789, and the forms of Bonds, Accounts

&c. relating to the Post Office Department, were duly handed to me; but my late indisposition has prevented my paying any attention to business 'till within a few days past.

I have now inspected those papers; and altho' I observe the Post Office has upon the whole, been profitable to the United States since the year 1782, yet I should wish to know the causes of the decrease of the income from that source between the year 1785, when it produced a profit of 13.373 Dolls. 54. 90ths. 2. 8ths. and the year 1789 when it lost 3208. Dols. 77. 90ths. 2. 8ths. I must, therefore, request you to send me, *in detail*, the receipts and expenditures of the Post Office for two years (Viz,) from January 1st., 1784 to January 1st., 1785, and from January 1st., 1788 to January 1st., 1789. The returns made from the several Post Offices to the general Post Office for the two years just mentioned, agreeably to the form marked No. 9, will shew what offices have been productive: and the accounts of the General Post Office for the same years will point out

the cause of the difference between the receipts and expenditures. I have read the several resolves of Congress referred to in your letter; and if the productiveness of the Post Office department was diminished by them, I conceive it must have been either by the increase of expence attending the conveyance of the Mail by Stages, (instead of Riders, as formerly), or by directing the Mail to be carried into parts of the Country where the expence of carrying it greatly exceeded the produce of it. However I presume the documents with which I have now requested to be furnished willfully explain this matter. I am etc.<sup>44</sup>

---

44. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On July 4 Robert Lewis recorded in his diary that the President made an extemporaneous reply to an address from the New York State Society of the Cincinnati in the following words: "I beg you, gentlemen, to return my most Affectionate regards to the Society of the Cincinnati of the State of New York, and assure them, that I receive their congratulations on this auspicious day, with a mind constantly anxious for the honor and welfare of our country; and can only say, that the force of my abilities, aided by an integrity of heart, shall be studiously pointed to the support of its dignity, and the promotion of its Prosperity and happiness." From the original in the possession of Miss V. L. Mitchell, of Charles Town, W. Va.

## To GEORGE MASON

New York, July 6, 1789.

Sir: The indisposition of the President of the United States will not permit him to write; he has therefore directed me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter to him of the 19th. Ulto. in which you recommend Mr. Joseph Fenwick to be appointed Consul for the United States at Bourdeaux or Consul General for France, and to inform you that the establishment of Consuls has not yet been taken up by Congress, but whenever it is, and he's called upon by the Law to nominate persons to fill that Department, he shall endeavor to bring forward such, as, from every information and upon every consideration have the best pretensions and are best qualified to discharge the duties annexed to the office. This line of conduct in the case of nominations, he marked out to himself from the beginning and he has in no instance departed from it.

The President has moreover, directed me to observe to you. that if his memory does not deceive him, Mr. Bonifield<sup>45</sup> whom you mention to have acted as Consul in Bourdeaux was not, as you observe, a deputy of Mr. Barclay,<sup>46</sup> but appointed to that office by Doctr. Franklin, and he is spoken favorably of by Mr. Jefferson in his letters to Congress. However as Mr. Jefferson has obtained leave to return to America and will possibly

---

45. John Bondfield.

---

46. Thomas Barclay.

soon be in this Country it is not likely that the establishment of Consuls will be taken up before his arrival when he will undoubtedly have it in his power to give some useful information on the subject. I am etc.<sup>47</sup>

---

47. This letter was signed by Lear, and is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On July 6 Washington acknowledged, briefly, the receipt from Capt. John Barry, of a list of the ships that were in Canton, China, in the last year. This letter is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On this same day (July 6), Washington also wrote briefly to Rev. Uzal Ogden, thanking him for the first number of his new publication: "As I have not been able (from the multiplicity of business which has crowded upon me since my recovery) to peruse the work which you sent me, I cannot, with propriety give it that testimony of my approbation which you desire, and which I dare say it deserves." This letter is recorded in the "Letter Book."

On July 9 Washington answered an address from the General Court of Massachusetts, which was dated June 25. Both address and answer are recorded in the "Letter Book." Nearly all of the legislatures sent the President complimentary addresses in the years 1789 and 1790, to which formal replies were made. These, with the addresses, are entered in the "Letter Book" in the special volumes titled "Addresses and Answers"; but unless the answers are more than mere form letters, they are not printed in the *Writings of Washington*.

On July 10 an address from the directors of the Society of United Brethren for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen was sent to the President from Bethlehem, Pa. Washington replied to it and both address and reply are recorded in the "Letter Book." One paragraph of the reply stated: "In proportion as the general Government of the United States shall acquire strength by duration, it is probable they may have it in their power to extend a salutary influence to the Aborigines in the extremities of their Territory. In the meantime, it will be a desirable thing for the protection of the Union to co-operate, as far as circumstances may conveniently admit, with the disinterested endeavours of your Society to civilize and Christianize the Savages of the Wilderness." A facsimile of this answer is in the "Washington Photostats."

## **To THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

New York, July 14, 1789.

Dear Sir: I find myself incompetent to form any decided opinion upon the paper I received from you the other day without having a view of the transactions which have been had with the Spanish Minister.

I wish also to know whether, if the negotiations are renewed, it can be made to appear from anything that that Gentleman has said, as the result of an advance towards it from him, in his official character? Unless this is the case, and prima facie the reverse, will it not convey to him and his court an idea that a change of sentiment has taken place in the governing powers of this country? Will it be expedient and proper for the President (at this moment) to encourage such an idea? at any rate without previously advising with the Senate? With very sincere esteem etc.<sup>48</sup>

---

48. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To GOVERNOR BEVERLEY RANDOLPH**

New York, July 15, 1789.

Sir: I had the honor, last evening, to receive your Excellency's letter of the 6th. inst. enclosing one from the County Lieutenant of Green Briar on the subject of Indian affairs.

When Congress have finished the necessary and important business which has occupied them since their first meeting, and in which they are now engaged, I shall seize the earliest moment to lay before them such information as I have received relative to the disputes with, and the depredations of the Indians on the several parts of our Western Frontiers; and doubt not but the subject will meet that immediate attention which it seems to deserve. With due consideration, I have the Honor, etc.<sup>49</sup>

---

49. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

[H.S.P.]

### **To THE ACTING POSTMASTER GENERAL<sup>50</sup>**

New York, July 17, 1789.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 15th. Instant enclosing the Post Office Acts. in detail for the years 1784 and 1788. But there still remains one point on which I would wish to have further information. By the statement of the Produce and Expences of the Post office which accompanied your letter of the 27th. of June, there appears to have been an annual *Profit* arising from that Department, amounting in the whole to 39.985 Dollars. As it is not shewn, by any documents which you have sent me, whether this ballance has been lodged in the Treasury of the United States, or appropriated to the use of the Post Office Department, I shall therefore thank you for early and satisfactory information on this head. I am etc.

---

50. Ebenezer Hazard was the holdover Acting Postmaster General.

### **To MATTHEW IRWIN<sup>53</sup>**

New York, July 20, 1789.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 9th instant enclosing a letter from Captain O'Bryen,<sup>54</sup> giving a detail of the sufferings of himself and several other unfortunate Americans, who are slaves in Algiers, and requesting that some measures may be taken by the government for their redemption.

Mr. Jefferson, our minister at the court of France, has in view, among other objects, the redemption of these unfortunate men; but what advances he has made in it, or whether he will be able to accomplish it or not, for want of the means, I am unable at present to say.

I am not satisfied that it would be proper, as you suggest, for me to begin or bring forward a subscription among the merchants and others in the maritime towns of this country, to raise a fund for delivering these unhappy men from their state of bondage; but I would cheerfully give every aid in my power to accomplish this humane and benevolent purpose. I am &c.<sup>55</sup>

---

53. Of Philadelphia, Pa.

---

54. Capt. Richard O'Bryen. He commanded the ship *Dauphin*, owned by Matthew and Thomas Irwin.

---

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To JAMES JACKSON<sup>56</sup>**

New York, July 22, 1789.

Sir: The President of the United States has directed me to return the enclosed letters to you, which he has perused, and likewise to inform you that he is now engaged in obtaining from the Secretary of the War and every other channel such information relative to the situation of Indian affairs as will enable him to form a just opinion thereon. I am etc.<sup>57</sup>

P. S. The President has this moment received advices from the Commissioners who have been appointed to treat with the Indians on the part of the United States, which inform him so far as he has examined them that matters are in a favorable train.<sup>55</sup>

---

56. Representative from Georgia.

---

57. This letter is signed "T. Lear," and is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**\*To CHARLES THOMSON**

New York, July 24, 1789.

Sir: I have contemplated your Note, wherein, after mentioning your having served in quality of Secretary of Congress from the first meeting of that Body in 1774 to the present time, through an eventful period of almost fifteen years, you announce your wish to retire to private life: and I have to regret that the period of my coming again into public life, should be exactly that, in which you are about to retire from it.

The present age does so much justice to the unsullied reputation with which you have always conducted yourself in the execution of the duties of your Office, and Posterity will find your Name so honorably connected with the verification of such a multitude of astonishing facts, that my single suffrage would add little to the illustration of your merits. Yet I cannot withhold any just testimonial, in favor of so old, so faithful and so able a public officer, which might tend to soothe his mind in the shade of retirement. Accept, then, this serious Declaration, that your Services have been important, as your patriotism was distinguished; and enjoy that best of all rewards, the consciousness of having done your duty well.

You will be pleased, Sir, to deliver the Books, Records and Papers of the late Congress, the Great Seal of the Federal Union, and the Seal of the Admiralty, to Mr. Roger Alden,<sup>58</sup> the late Deputy Secretary of Congress; who is requested to take charge of them until farther directions shall be given. I beg you to be persuaded that it will always afford me real pleasure to extend whatever encouragement may be consistent with my general duties, to such particular Persons as have long been faithful and useful Servants to the Community. I finally commend you to the protection of Heaven, and sincerely wish you may enjoy every species of felicity.<sup>59</sup>

---

58. Principal clerk in the Department for Foreign Affairs.

---

59. From the original in the *Thomson Papers* in the Library of Congress.

**To RICHARD HENRY LEE**

New York, August 2, 1789.

Dear Sir: The extreme hurry in which I have been for several days, to compare the merits and pretensions of the several applicants for appointments under the Revenue in order that the nominations<sup>69</sup> might speedily follow the passing of the Collection Bill has prevented my acknowledging the receipt of your favor of the 27th Ultimo before.

Mr. Charles Lee will certainly be brought forward as Collector for the port of Alexandria; but for the reason you have assigned, and from a persuasion that Mr. Thos. Lee has entertained an erroneous opinion of the emoluments of the Office at Dumfries I think it would be best for Scott<sup>70</sup> to go there which will give poor Hanson<sup>71</sup> (who is worthy of something better, if with propriety it could be given to him) the Surveyorship at Alexandria. As I am perfectly unacquainted with the Port of Yeocomico, and of the Characters living there, I would thank you for naming a fit person as a Collector for that district, on or before 1 O'clock tomorrow.

I thought you looked badly the other day, but not having heard of your indisposition I said nothing, I hope your health is quite restored.

---

69. The complete list of nominations for collectors, naval officers, and surveyors of customs was sent to the Senate by the President, August 3, and is printed in the *Executive Journal*, vol. 1.

---

70. Richard Marshall Scott.

---

71. Samuel Hanson.

I am unable to sit yet but on soft cushionings but have the Doctors assurances that a few days more will relieve me from the inconvenience I labor under at present on that account. I am etc.<sup>72</sup>

---

72. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 4 Washington replied to an address from the New York Legislature, dated July 15. Both the address and the reply are entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*. The original of Washington's reply is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

**\*To THOMAS NELSON**



New York, July 27, 1789.

Sir: The sincere regard I had for your very worthy, deceased father, induces me to offer you a place in my family. How convenient and agreeable it may be for you to accept the offer,<sup>66</sup> is with you to determine; and that you may be the better enabled to judge, I shall inform you that the emoluments will be about six hundred dollars pr. ann., and the expences trifling as your board, lodging and washing (as also that of your Servant if you bring one) will be in the family. Horses if you keep any must be at your own expence because there will be no public occasion for them.

The duties that will be required of you, are, generally, to assist in writing, receiving and entertaining company, and in the discharge of such other matters as is not convenient or practicable for the President to attend to in person. Whether you accept this offer or not I should be glad to hear from you as soon as it is conveniently possible because there are a number of Gentlemen who are anxiously desirous of this appointment but whose applications will remain undecided on until I receive an answer from you.

With best respects to your good Mother in which Mrs. Washington joins me I am with great esteem and regard Sir, Your etc.<sup>67</sup>

---

66. Nelson's letter of August 13, accepting the offer, is in the *Washington Papers*.

---

67. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by George A. Ball, of Muncie, Ind. The "Letter Book" copy of this letter dates it August 3.

## **To WILSON MILES CARY**

New York, August 10, 1789.

Dear Sir: I have received your very obliging and Affectionate letter of the 19th. Ult. and can assure you that no circumstance, amidst the numerous occurrences of my New and arduous employment, has given me more heartfelt satisfaction than the repeated testimonies of approbation which my conduct in accepting the Presidency of these United States has drawn from every quarter, and particularly from those who I trust, know me well enough to do justice to the motives which induced me once more to embark on the Ocean of public life. Among those of the latter description I must rank you, my dear Sir; and must beg your acceptance of my best thanks for your good wishes and kind gratulations on the recovery of my health. Mr. Brough whom you mention to have been the

Searcher at Hampton and recommended as a person suitable to fill an Office in the customs, could not, consistently; be brought into office; for the Law established but one Office at Hampton which, agreeably to the general rule which I had prescribed to myself in the nominations, is filled by Mr. Jacob Wray the former Naval Officer there. You will, therefore have the goodness to believe that his not having been put in office did not proceed from a want of faith in your recommendation, but from an adherence to that justice and impartiality which the *Public* demands, and from which I hope I shall never intentionally depart. I am etc.<sup>81</sup>

---

81. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To PIERCE BUTLER<sup>84</sup>**

New York, August 10, 1789.

Sir: I thank you for giving me the perusal of the enclosed letters. The business respecting the Indians is now before Congress. It would be well if the information concerning fugitive Negro's could come forward specifically. Judge Drayton's<sup>85</sup> name shall be placed among those who will come under consideration when nominations for the Judiciary are taken up, and I am etc.<sup>83</sup>

---

84. Senator from South Carolina.

---

85. William Drayton.

---

83. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To BENJAMIN LINCOLN**

New York, August 11, 1789.

Dear Sir: On the 15th of September next there is to be a treaty held in the State of Georgia, between the Indians on the Southern frontiers and commissioners on the part of Georgia. At this treaty there will be a numerous and respectable concourse of Indians, two, and some say to the number of three thousand. Their famous Counsellor, the noted McGillvray<sup>86</sup> is to be present at it; and it is now in agitation, and a bill is before the House of representatives for that purpose, to appoint

Commissioners on the part of the United States to attend at this treaty to establish a permanent and lasting peace between the United States and the Indians on our Southern and Western frontiers. It is necessary, in a matter of such importance to this Country, that these Commissioners should be persons who have been known in public life, and who are very respectable characters; and if to these two circumstances could be added, their being held in high estimation in the Southern States, without being inhabitants of them, it would be a very desirable thing. Under these circumstances, it is my wish that you should be one of these commissioners;<sup>87</sup> and I have therefore given you this early intimation of the matter that you might, (if the matter in agitation comes to issue, and is agreeable to you and can be made to comport with your present Office) be

---

86. Alexander McGillivray. He was the son of a Tory and a Creek woman. Georgia had confiscated his estate during the Revolutionary War.

---

87. On August 20 Washington nominated Lincoln as one of these Commissioners. "My reason for nominating him at this early moment, is that it will not be possible for the public to avail itself of his services on this occasion, unless his appointment can be forwarded to him by the Mail, which will leave this place tomorrow morning." This message is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*. The Senate confirmed Lincoln that same day.

making such arrangements as will enable you to be at New York and ready to embark for Georgia, on or before the first day of September; and with an expectation of being absent three or four Months.

You will make up your mind on this matter and give me an answer by the first post after you receive this, as you see no time is to be lost; for it is absolutely necessary that the Commissioners should be on the spot the 15th. of September to prevent the enormous expense which would be incurred by detaining such a numerous body of Indians for any time. In the meantime you will keep this intimation to yourself, for in the first place it is not *certain* that Commissioners will be appointed; and if they should other circumstances might render a concealment of this intimation proper. I am &c.<sup>88</sup>

---

88. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 12 Tobias Lear wrote to John Taylor Gilman, one of the Commissioners for settling the accounts of the United States with the individual States, granting him, by direction of the President, leave of absence for three weeks. This letter is recorded in the "Letter Book."

On August 15 Washington wrote briefly to Arthur Young, sending him “a sample of the wool produced by my sheep...a fleece of a middling quality.” It was sent in the care of Wakelin Welch & Son. This letter is recorded in the “Letter Book.”

**To THOMAS RANDALL, AUGUSTINE LAWRENCE, AND WILLIAM HEYER<sup>92</sup>**

New York, August 18, 1789.

Gentlemen: As the period has arrived, when the United States were to make provision for keeping up the proper supplies for the Light Houses in different Ports, and as the Treasury Department has not yet been organized so as to carry that arrangement into effect; I must desire that you will still continue the superintendence of the Light House in this Port, keeping an exact account of the expences which may be incurred for that purpose; and which will be reimbursed by the Treasurer of the United States, as soon as such an officer shall be appointed. He will also be authorized to take the management of the business into his hands and to make the necessary contracts accordingly. I am etc.<sup>93</sup>

---

92. Wardens of the Port of New York.

---

93. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To COMFORT SAGE**

New York, August 18, 1789.

Sir: I received your letter dated the 31st. of July, a few days after the nominations in the Revenue Department had been made; and your other letter of the 8th. instant has just been put into my hands. In consequence of these letters, it is but right I should inform you, that my not having received any immediate application from you, expressive of your readiness to fill the office, was the reason why you was not nominated Surveyor for the Port of Middletown; and that it was not owing to any unfavorable representations respecting your reputation. On the other hand, Mr. Miller's wishes were made known to me *in season* ; and his character represented to be such as would undoubtedly secure, in a person who had thus declared himself to be ready to accept the office, a

proper execution of the duties of it. You may be assured, therefore, my only object was to have the public business put into a train of being performed with certainty.

I hope, Sir, from this statement of facts, you will do me the justice to believe that I was far from designing to do anything disagreeable or prejudicial to you; and that I am etc.<sup>93</sup>

---

93. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To CYRUS GRIFFIN

New York, August 18, 1789.

Sir: I think it expedient to acknowledge the receipt of your two notes, dated the 10th. of July and the 14th. of August,<sup>94</sup> for the purpose of assuring you that there was certainly nothing improper in the tenor of them. But it will be an instance of Justice to inform you, at the sametime, that, without considering myself at liberty to give either encouragement or discouragement to the wishes of Gentlemen who have offered themselves as Candidates for offices, I have invariably avoided giving any sentiment or opinion; for the purpose of reserving myself unembarrassed with promises until all the Candidates are known and the occasion, when decision shall become necessary on my part.

In the meantime, I pray you to be persuaded that in all personal and private considerations, I am etc.<sup>95</sup>

---

94. Griffin's notes are in the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress. In them he requested an appointment in the diplomatic service or to the Supreme Court.

---

95. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

The general convention of bishops, clergy, and laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina delivered an address to the President at this approximate time which, together with Washington's reply, is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*. In that reply Washington stated that "human happiness and moral duty are inseparably connected" and that "It affords edifying prospects indeed to see Christians of different denominations dwell together in more charity, and conduct themselves in respect to each other with a more christian-like spirit than ever they have done in any former age,

or in any other Nation." Sparks prints this reply as of August 19; but both address and reply are undated in the "Letter Book."

**To BENJAMIN LINCOLN**

New York, August 20, 1789.

Dear Sir: I informed you on the 11th. Inst. that a Bill was before the House to provide for the expences that might attend the Treaties and Negotiations to be made with the Indian Tribes, and for the appointment of Commissioners to be employed in the same.<sup>96</sup>

This Bill has to day passed into a Law, and in consequence thereof I have nominated, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, have appointed you one of the three Commissioners to be employ'd in negotiating a treaty with the Southern Indians. Should you accept of this appointment it will be *absolutely necessary* for you to set off for this place immediately on the receipt of this letter; for, as I mentioned in my last, the Treaty is to be held in Georgia at the rock landing on the Ogeeche River the 15th of Septr., and the Commissioners *must* leave this place on or before the first day of September in order to be upon the spot on the day appointed. The propriety of this punctuality will be obvious upon a consideration of the great expence which will be incurred by detaining so large a

---

96. On August 21 Cyrus Griffin and David Humphreys were nominated in a message to the Senate, which is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*. They were confirmed the same day.

Body of Indians as will probably attend this treaty, longer than is necessary to transact the business of the Treaty. A Vessel will be provided here to carry the Commissioners and everything requisite in the business to Georgia. The other Commissioners are not yet appointed, but they will undoubtedly be such Characters as will comport with the respectability and importance of the Commission. If you have a suit of Regimentals it may be well to take them with you.

8 O'clock P.M. I have this moment received your letter of the 16th. instant and am happy to find that the business of your office<sup>97</sup> is in so favorable a train as you mention, and that you can leave it for a few months without inconvenience and come on *immediately* I am etc.<sup>98</sup>

---

97. Collector of the port of Boston, Mass.

98. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To WALTER STEWART**

New York, August 21, 1789.

Sir: Your letter of the 15th. Instant containing observations upon the organization and discipline of the Militia of the United States has been duly received; and you will please to accept of my thanks for your communications on this subject.

In reply to your application for the appointment of Inspector of the Militia of the District of Pennsylvania, I can only say, as I have done upon every other occasion of a similar nature, that I hold myself free to bring forward such Characters as I shall, upon every consideration, think best qualified and have the best pretensions to fill offices, whenever I may be called upon, by law, to nominate persons for offices which are thereby established. I am etc.<sup>99</sup>

---

99. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

New York, August 26, 1789.

Sir: Provision having been made by the Act of Congress of the 20th. of August 1789, that a sum not exceeding twenty thousand dollars, arising from the duties on imposts and tonnage shall be appropriated for defraying the expence of negotiating and treating with the Indian Tribes; I have therefore to request that you will use your exertions to obtain the necessary means for carrying the intention of Congress into effect. As soon as the Treasury Department shall be organised, Warrants will issue for the monies according to Law. I am etc.<sup>2</sup>

---

2. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To REVEREND JOHN HURT<sup>3</sup>**

New York, August 28, 1789.

Sir: I have duly received your letter of the 24th. inst.,<sup>4</sup> and have to inform you on the subjects mentioned in it, that, according to the best of my recollection the Arrangements respecting the Commutation of the half pay of the officers in the late Army were made between Congress and a Committee from the Army, without any agency of mine. Nor do I remember to have taken any measures with regard to the particular Resolution for granting Lands to different descriptions of men in the Army. Thus unacquainted with the reasons on which Congress acted under the old Confederation, I cannot undertake to give any opinion, farther than that the present Congress is the only power competent to redress any grievances which may have been suffered by any Individuals or Classes of men, who have been in the Public Service. For myself, I trust I shall be disposed always to give my concurrence to any Public Proceedings, which may come within the sphere of my duty, and which (upon a fair investigation) may be deemed equitable. And I may add, that particularly in the present instance, I should be inclined to pay every proper attention to the subject, being sensible of the merits of the Gentlemen concerned, and being With great esteem and regard, etc.<sup>5</sup>

---

3. Of New York.

---

4. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

---

5. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

United States, September 5, 1789.

Sir: In order to carry into effect a certain survey directed to be made by a Resolve of the Congress of the United States, passed the 26th of August it has been found necessary to ascertain a certain point within the Limits of Canada, from which a meridian line is to be drawn; and as the consent of the British Commander in chief in Canada is necessary to be obtained before any operations can be made within their territory, I have seen fit to direct the Honble. John Jay, acting Secretary of foreign Affairs for the United States, to send a special messenger to Lord Dorchester for that purpose; and as no provision is made to defray the expences which may attend the execution of the above survey, I hereby direct you to advance to Captn. Isaac Guion (the messenger employ'd by the Honble. Mr. Jay) out of the money appropriated to Indian Affairs, and which is in the bank of New York, subject to your order the sum of three hundred and fifty Dollars to defray the expences which



may attend his mission into Canada, and to be accounted for by him on his return; which sum shall be replaced in your hands as soon as provision is made for the purpose of carrying into effect the before mentioned survey.<sup>12</sup> I am etc.<sup>13</sup>

---

12. Andrew Ellicott, of Maryland, was appointed the surveyor to run these lines. His commission, dated September 5, reciting that he was to ascertain the boundary line between the United States and the States of Massachusetts and New York, and also that "having run the Meridian Line between Lake Erie and the State of Pennsylvania...should proceed to make a survey of the land lying west of the said line, between Lake Erie and the State of Pennsylvania so as to ascertain the quantity thereof." This Commission is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On September 4 Washington wrote to Knox that this survey was "a matter of too great importance to the United States to await the organization of the Treasury Department," and directed Knox to advance Ellicott \$1,125 out of the money for the treaty negotiations with the Southern Indians, to be replaced "as soon as provision can be made to defray the expences attending the before mentioned survey." The draft of this letter is in the *Washington Papers*. (See *Journals of the Continental Congress*, June 6, 1788.)

---

13. The draft is in the writing of Tobias Lear.

On September 5 the Legislature of Pennsylvania delivered an address to Washington, who replied to it at some undetermined date, in which he said: "It should be the highest ambition of every American to extend his views beyond himself, and to bear in mind that his conduct will not only affect himself, his country, and his immediate posterity; but that its influence may be co-extensive with the world, and stamp political happiness or misery on ages yet unborn. To establish this desirable end; and to establish the government of *laws*, the union of these States is absolutely necessary; therefore in every proceeding, this great, this important object should ever be kept in view; and, so long as our measures tend to this; and are marked with the wisdom of a well-informed and enlightened people, we may reasonably hope, under the smiles of Heaven, to convince the world that the happiness of nations can be accomplished by pacific revolutions in their political systems, without the destructive intervention of the sword." This reply is recorded in the "Letter Book" immediately following the address. It is printed by Sparks at the end of September, 1789.

## **To EDMUND RANDOLPH**

New York, September 8, 1789.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 2d Ultimo came duly to hand. A tedious and painful disorder which deprived me for many Weeks of the use of my pen, and which consequently required the greater exertion of it when I was able to set up, is the best apology I can make for not having acknowledged the receipt of the above letter sooner.

The list of associates who purchased 100 Tickets in the lottery of the deceased Colo. Byrd is all the memorandum I have of that transaction. To the best of my recollection Mr. Thomson Mason (deceased) was one of the associates and was either authorised, or assumed (I do not know which) the management of the business. He did it so effectually it seems as to monopolize the whole interest. Some of the prizes it has been said, are valuable, but whether there is any Clue by which Mr. Masons conduct in this business can be developed I am unable to say. Your Uncle (The Honorable Peyton Randolph) was one of the ten associates. But if neither Mr. Fitzhugh nor any of the others who are living can give such information as would avail in an enquiry we must, I presume, set down with the loss of the money and prizes.

With respect to Mr. Powells<sup>17</sup> application I can only repeat to you what I say to all others upon similar occasions, that is, I leave myself entirely free until the office is established and the moment shall arrive when the nomination is to be made, then, under my best information and a full view of all circumstances I shall endeavor to the best of my judgment to combine justice to individuals with the public good making the latter my primary object. My best wishes attend Mrs. Randolph and your family and with sentiments of sincere regard and friendship I am etc.<sup>18</sup>

---

17. Benjamin Powell, of Williamsburg, Va.

---

18. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On September 9 Washington signed the ratification of the Consular Convention with France, Nov. 14. 1788. This ratification is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To GEORGE GILPIN**

New York, September 14, 1789.

Dear Sir: I am favored with the receipt of your letter of the 2 instant, and thank you for the information you have been so good as to communicate.

Every circumstance which serves to shew the utility, and which explains the progress of an undertaking so advantageous to the Community as the navigation of the Potomack, is at once grateful and interesting.

When your leisure allows an opportunity of making out the draft you mention,<sup>26</sup> I shall be glad to receive it, with such observations as may consist with your convenience. I am etc.<sup>25</sup>

---

26. Gilpin had written: "As soon as I can make out a proper draft I will send one to you with the Courses, distance and perpendicular fall of Potomack and of the Allegany Mountain where several of the great waters begin." Gilpin's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

On September 14 Washington answered an address from the Rhode Island Society of the Cincinnati, dated September 3. In it he wrote: "I am much pleased, Gentlemen, with the hope which you entertain that mistaken zeal [in Rhode Island] will give way to enlightened policy. And I desire to repeat to your Society assurances of the most affectionate esteem." Both address and Washington's reply are recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

---

25. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To ARTHUR CAMPBELL<sup>27</sup>

New York, September 15, 1789.

Sir: Your several favors of the 10th and 16th of May and 22d of August with their enclosures have been received. The information which they communicate claims my thanks, and the personal kindness they express is entitled to my grateful acknowledgments.

Watchful over every interest of the Union, Congress during their present Session, have passed a Law authorising the appointment of Commissioners to treat with the Indians, and providing for the expences attendant on the negotiations. In pursuance thereof Benjamin Lincoln, Cyrus Griffin, and David Humphreys Esquires have been appointed Commissioners; and they sailed from New York for Savannah in Georgia fifteen days ago.

Circumstances concur to favor a belief that the most beneficial consequences will flow from this measure, and that its effects will be extended to every description of Indians within, and contiguous to, the United States.

I accept with pleasure your obliging offers of further communications, and shall at all times be happy to receive such information as you may think interesting to the Government of the United States. I am etc.<sup>28</sup>

---

27. Of Washington County, Va.

---

28. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### To BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

New York, September 23, 1789.

Dear Sir: The affectionate congratulations on the recovery of my health, and the warm expressions of personal friendship which were contained in your favor of the 16th instant,<sup>37</sup> claim my gratitude. And the consideration that it was written when you were afflicted with a painful malady, greatly increases my obligation for it.

Would to God, my dear Sir, that I could congratulate you upon the removal of that excruciating pain under which you labour! and that your existence might close with as much ease to yourself, as its continuance has been beneficial to our Country and useful to mankind! Or, if the United wishes of a free people, joined with the earnest prayers of every friend to Science and humanity could relieve the body from pains or Infirmities, you could claim an exemption on this score. But this cannot be, and you have within yourself the only resource to which we can confidently apply for relief: a *Philosophic mind* .

If to be venerated for benevolence: If to be admired for talents: If to be esteemed for patriotism: if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know that you have not lived in vain; And I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of

---

37. Franklin had written: "For my own personal Ease, I should have died two years ago; but tho' those Years have been spent in excruciating Pain, I am pleas'd that I have liv'd them, since they have

brought me to see our present Situation. I am now finishing my 84th. [year] and probably with it my Career in this Life; but in what ever State of Existence I am plac'd hereafter, if I retain any Memory of what has pass'd here, I shall with it retain the Esteem, Respect, and Affection with which I have long been, my dear Friend, Yours most sincerely."

your life to be assured that so long as I retain my memory, you will be thought on with respect, veneration and Affection by Your sincere friend etc.<sup>38</sup>

**To BENJAMIN FISHBOURN**

New York, September 25, 1789.

Sir: In reply to your letter of this date,<sup>41</sup> addressed to the President of the United States, I am directed by him to inform you that when he nominated you for Naval Officer of the Port of Savannah he was ignorant of any charge existing against you, and, not having, since that time, had any other exhibit of the facts which were alledged in the Senate than what is stated in the certificates which have been published by you, he does not consider himself competent to give any opinion on the subject. I am etc.<sup>42</sup>

---

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The original is in the possession of the American Philosophical Society.

---

41. Fishbourne's letter is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, no. 78, vol. 9, fol. 645.

---

42. This letter, signed "William Jackson," is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

**To REVEREND SAMUEL LANGDON<sup>53</sup>**

New York, September 28, 1789.

Sir: You will readily believe me when I assure you that the necessary attention to the business in which I have been lately engaged is the sole cause of my not having sooner acknowledged the receipt of your letter of the 8th. of July, and made a proper return for your politeness in sending me

the Sermon which accompanied it. You will now, Sir, please to accept my best thanks for this mark of attention, as well as for the friendly expressions contained in your letter.

The man must be bad indeed who can look upon the events of the American Revolution without feeling the warmest gratitude towards the great Author of the Universe whose divine interposition was so frequently manifested in our behalf. And it is my earnest prayer that we may so conduct ourselves as to merit a continuance of those blessings with which we have hitherto been favored. I am etc.<sup>54</sup>

---

53. Of New Hampshire.

---

54. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On September 28 the Religious Society called "Quakers," from their yearly meeting for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and the western parts of Maryland and Virginia, sent an address to Washington who replied to it on some unknown date His reply is recorded in the "Letter Book" immediately following the address. In it he wrote:

"Government being, among other purposes, instituted to protect the persons and consciences of men from oppression, it certainly is the duty of rulers, not only to abstain from it themselves, but, according to their stations, to prevent it in others.

"The liberty enjoyed by the people of these States, of worshipping Almighty God agreeably to their consciences, is not only among the choicest of their *blessings*, but also of their *rights*. While men perform their social duties faithfully, they do all that society or the state can with propriety demand or expect; and remain responsible only to their Maker for the religion, or modes of faith, which they may prefer or profess.

"Your principles and conduct are well known to me; and it is doing the people railed Quakers no more than justice to say, that (except their declining to share with others the burthen of the common defence) there is no denomination among us, who are more exemplary and useful citizens.

"I assure you very explicitly, that in my opinion the conscientious scruples of all men should be treated with great delicacy and tenderness; and it is my wish and desire, that the laws may always be as extensively accommodated to them, as a due regard to the protection and essential interests of the nation may justify and permit."

To JOHN TAYLOR GILMAN

New York, September 28, 1789.

Sir: I am sorry to learn from your letter of the 12 inst., that the state of your health is such as will, in all probability, prevent your attendance on the business of your commission.

The ordinance of the late Congress instituting the Board<sup>56</sup> of which you are a Member, made it necessary for all the Commissioners to be present when their business commenced, and likewise required the attendance of the whole when any final adjustment took place. As the business has already commenced agreeably to the ordinance, Genl. Irwin<sup>57</sup> informs me that it is progressing under his inspection, and that the presence of the whole Board will not be absolutely necessary 'till some final settlement of Accounts is about to take place. I shall therefore delay making any new appointment until circumstances may render it necessary in hopes that you will yet so far recover your health as to be able to attend the duties of your office in time; for I should be very unwilling that a temporary illness should deprive a man of his office unless the public good rendered a new appointment absolutely necessary.<sup>58</sup>

Mr. Kean<sup>59</sup> has not yet arrived, but by a letter which I received from him yesterday he may be daily expected. With my best wishes for the restoration of your health I am etc.<sup>60</sup>

---

56. For settling the accounts of the United States with the individual States.

---

57. William Irvine (Irwin).

---

58. On December 14 Lear wrote to Gilman that the two other Commissioners had informed the President "that the business of their commission is now retarded, and will very shortly be at a stand without the presence of the other Commissioner; I am therefore directed by the President of the United States to give you notice thereof, and to inform you that your attendance cannot be well delayed beyond the first, and certainly not beyond the middle of January, without injury to the public. Should the state of your health be such...the President wishes you to give him immediate information thereof, that another person may be appointed, and the public business not be unnecessarily retarded." Lear's letter is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the Washington Papers.

59. John Kean.

---

60. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To EDMUND RANDOLPH**

New York, September 28,<sup>61</sup> 1789.

Dear Sir: Impressed with a conviction that the due administration of justice is the firmest pillar of good Government, I have considered the first arrangement of the Judicial department as essential to the happiness of our Country, and to the stability of its political system; hence the selection of the fittest characters to expound the laws, and dispense justice, has been an invariable object of my anxious concern.

I mean not to flatter when I say, that considerations like these have ruled in the nomination of the Attorney-General of the United States, and, that my private wishes would be highly gratified by your acceptance of the Office. I regarded the office as requiring those talents to conduct its important duties, and that disposition to sacrifice to the public good, which I believe you to possess and entertain; in both instances, I doubt not, the event will justify the conclusion; The appointment I hope, will be accepted, and its functions, I am assured, will be well performed.<sup>62</sup>

---

61. Both Sparks and Ford date this letter September 27.

---

62. Randolph had been confirmed by the Senate, Saturday, September 26, as Attorney General. (See Washington's letter to the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court. Sept. 30, 1789, *post.*)

Notwithstanding the prevailing disposition to frugality, the Salary of this office appears to have been fixed, at what it is, from a belief that the Station would confer pre-eminence on its possessor, and procure for him a decided preference of Professional employment. As soon as the Acts, which are necessary accompaniments of the appointment can be got ready you will receive official notice of the latter; this letter is only to be considered as an early communication of my sentiments on this occasion and as a testimony of the sincere regard and esteem, with which I am &c.<sup>63</sup>

---

63. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.



**To EDMUND PENDLETON**

New York, September 28, 1789.

I write to you, my dear Sir, on a subject which has engaged much of my reflection, and to which I am persuaded I shall obtain your ready and candid attention.

Regarding the due administration of Justice as the corner stone of good Government, I have considered the first arrangement of the judicial department as essential to the happiness of our Country, and to the stability of its political system. Under this impression it has been an invariable object of anxious solicitude with me to select the fittest Characters to expound the Laws and dispense justice.

Concurring in sentiment with some others of your friends that the functions of the Supreme Bench, which involve the fatigue of Circuit Courts, would be too much for the infirm State of your health, I believed it necessary, to avail our Country of your abilities and the influence of your example, by nominating you to the office of Judge of the District Court of Virginia, which will not require much greater personal exertion than the duties of your present station, and I trust the hope, with which I flatter myself, that I shall have the pleasure to hear of your acceptance of the appointment, is well founded, indeed I cannot doubt it, when I again consider the necessity

of giving a tone to the system in its out-set, by placing the administration of the Laws with the best and wisest of our Citizens.

As soon as the Acts, which are necessary accompaniments...<sup>64</sup>

---

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The omitted portion is the same as the conclusion of Washington's letter to Edmund Randolph, Sept. 28, 1789, *q. v.*

**\*To ROBERT HANSON HARRISON**

New York, September 28, 1789.

Dear Sir: It would be unnecessary to remark to you, that the administration of Justice is the strongest cement of good Government, did it not follow as a consequence that the first organization of the

federal judiciary is essential to the happiness of our Country, and to the stability of our political system.

Under this impression it has been the invariable object of my anxious solicitude to select the fittest characters to expound the Laws and dispense justice. To tell you that this sentiment has ruled me in your nomination to a seat on the Supreme Bench of the United States, would be but to repeat opinions with which you are already well acquainted; opinions which meet a just co-incidence in the public Mind.

Your friends, and your fellow-citizens, anxious for the respect of the Court to which you are appointed, will be happy to learn your acceptance; and no one among them will be more so than myself.

As soon as the Acts which are necessary accompaniments...<sup>55</sup>

---

55. From the original in the House of Representatives Collection, in the National Archives. The omitted portion is the same as the conclusion of Washington's letter to Edmund Randolph, Sept. 28, 1789, *q. v.*

**\*To THOMAS JOHNSON**

New York, September 28, 1789.

Dear Sir: In assenting to the opinion that the due administration of Justice is...<sup>52</sup>

Consulting your domestic inclinations and the state of your health I yielded on a recent occasion, to the opinions of some of your friends who thought that you would not be prevailed on to leave your State to mingle in the Administration of public affairs. But I found it impossible, in selecting a character to preside in the District-Court of Maryland, to refuse to, what I conceive to be, the public wish, and to the conviction of my own Mind, the necessity of nominating you to that Office. And I cannot but flatter myself that the same reasons which have led you to former Sacrifices in the public service, will now operate to induce your acceptance of

---

52. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by Stan V. Henkels, of Philadelphia, Pa. The omitted portions are practically the same as the first and last paragraphs of Washington's letter to Edmund Randolph, Sept. 28, 1789, *q. v.*

an appointment so highly interesting to your Country.

As soon as the Acts, which are necessary accompaniments...<sup>52</sup>

---

52. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by Stan V. Henkels, of Philadelphia, Pa. The omitted portions are practically the same as the first and last paragraphs of Washington's letter to Edmund Randolph, Sept. 28, 1789, *q. v.*

## To JOHN RUTLEDGE

New York, September 29, 1789.

Dear Sir: In requesting your candid attention to a subject, which I deem highly interesting to our Country, I am convinced that I address myself well.

Regarding the due administration of Justice as the strongest cement of good government, I have considered the first organization of the Judicial Department as essential to the happiness of our Citizens, and to the stability of our political system. Under this impression it has been an invariable object of anxious solicitude with me to select the fittest Characters to expound the laws and dispense justice.

This sentiment, Sir, has over-ruled, in my mind, the opinions of some of your friends, when they suggested that you might not accept an appointment to a seat on the Supreme Bench of the United States. The hesitation, which those opinions produced, was but momentary, when I reflected on the confidence which your former services had established in the public mind, and when I exercised my own belief of your disposition still further to sacrifice to the good of your Country.

In any event I concluded that I should discharge the duty which I owe to the Public by nominating to this important office a Person whom I judged best qualified to execute its functions, and you will allow me to repeat the wish that I may have the pleasure to hear of your acceptance of the appointment. My best respects are offered to Mrs. Rutledge and with sentiments of very great esteem and regard I am etc.<sup>66</sup>

---

66. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To THE ASSOCIATE JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT**

New York, September 30, 1789.

Sir: I experience peculiar pleasure in giving you notice of your appointment to the Office of an Associate Judge in the Supreme Court of the United States.

Considering the Judicial System as the chief Pillar upon which our national Government must rest, I have thought it my duty to nominate, for the high Offices in that department, such men as I conceived would give dignity and lustre to our National Character; and I flatter myself that the love which you bear to our Country, and a desire to promote general happiness, will lead you to a ready acceptance of the enclosed Commission, which is accompanied with such Laws as have passed relative to your Office. I have the honor etc.<sup>71</sup>

---

71. A form letter. The "Letter Book" records that it was also sent to the Attorney General. Of the associate judges appointed, to wit, John Rutledge, James Wilson, William Cushing, Robert Hanson Harrison, and John Blair, only Harrison declined.

## **To THE DISTRICT JUDGES OF THE UNITED STATES**

United States, September 30, 1789.

Sir: I have the pleasure to enclose you a Commission as Judge of the United States for the District of , to which Office I have nominated and, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, have appointed you.

In my nomination of persons to fill Offices in the Judicial Department I have been guided by the importance of the object, considering it as of the first magnitude, and as the pillar upon which our political fabric must rest. I have endeavored to bring into the high Offices of its administration such Characters as will give stability and dignity to our National Government; and I persuade myself that they will discover a due desire to promote the happiness of our Country by a ready acceptance of their several appointments.

The Laws which have passed relative to your Office accompany the Commission.<sup>72</sup> I am etc.<sup>73</sup>

---

72. A form letter. The names of the judges nominated and confirmed are in the *Executive Journal*, vol. 1, pp. 29–33.

---

73. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To THE MARSHALS AND ATTORNEYS OF THE SEVERAL DISTRICTS OF THE UNITED STATES**

United States, September 30, 1789.

Sir: I have the pleasure to inform you that you are appointed (Marshal or Attorney) for the District of—and your Commission is enclosed, accompanied with such Laws as have passed relative to the Judicial Department of the United States.

The high importance of the Judicial System in our National Government, made it an indispensable duty to select such Characters to fill the several offices in it as would discharge their respective trusts with honor to themselves and advantage to their Country.<sup>70</sup> I am etc.<sup>69</sup>

---

70. A form letter. The names of the marshals and attorneys nominated and confirmed are in the *Executive Journal*, vol. 1, pp. 29–33.

---

69. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE**

New York, October 5, 1789.

Sir: It is with singular pleasure that I address you as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, for which Office your Commission is enclosed.

In nominating you for the important station which you now fill, I not only acted in conformity to my best judgment; but I trust I did a grateful thing to the good Citizens of these United States; and I have a full confidence that the love which you bear to our Country, and a desire to promote the general happiness, will not suffer you to hesitate a moment to bring into action the talents, knowledge and integrity which are so necessary to be exercised at the head of that department which must be considered as the key-stone of our political fabric. I have the honor etc.<sup>80</sup>

---

80. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR**

New York, October 12, 1789.

Sir: A variety of avocations has prevented my giving an earlier acknowledgment to your letter of the 17th of July. I will now thank you, Sir, to furnish me with an Acct. of the quantity and cost of the materials which have been placed on Cape Henry by the Commissioners appointed by the Assembly of Virginia for the purpose of building a light-house, as you have been so obliging as to offer to do it.

I am sorry that you have not yet received any of my out-standing debts, but am not without hope that you will be able to collect at least some part of them shortly.<sup>85</sup> This case is hard, and I believe singular. I am etc.<sup>84</sup>

---

85. In a brief note of November 23, Washington acknowledged the above account from Newton with a statement of the outstanding debts due Washington "which I make no doubt you will use your best endeavors to recover." This note is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

---

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To CHRISTIAN SENFF**

New York, October 12, 1789.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 10th of May, and have no doubt of the utility of the plan which you propose of taking an Accurate survey of the inland Navigation from New York to East Florida; but there has been during the past Session, such a multiplicity of business of a pressing nature before Congress that they had no opportunity of attending to any matters which could admit of delay, and your proposition being of such a nature as not to demand an *immediate* attention, to the exclusion of more urgent affairs, it can be laid before Congress at a future period when they will take such measures thereon as their judgment may direct. I am etc.<sup>84</sup>

---

84. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

New York, October 13, 1789.

Dear General: I have been honored with the receipt of your letters of the 31st of January and 17th of February last; and I should have had the pleasure to address you sooner, but a tedious indisposition, and very numerous avocations, since my recovery, have so entirely engaged my time, as to leave me but very little, or no leisure for the agreeable duties of friendship.

I embrace the obliging offer of His Excellency the Count de Moustier (who favors my letter with his care) to renew an intercourse which will ever give me pleasure, and to enhance your satisfaction by telling you, that the political affairs of the United States are in so pleasing a train as to promise respectability to their government, and happiness to our Citizens. The opposition offered to the reform of our federal constitution has in a great measure subsided, and there is every reason to predict political harmony and individual happiness to the States and citizens of confederated America.

The Revolution, announced by the intelligence from France, must be interesting to the nations of the world in

general, and is certainly of the greatest importance to the country in which it has happened. I am persuaded I express the sentiments of my fellow-citizens, when I offer an earnest prayer, that it may terminate in the permanent honor and happiness of your government and people. With sentiments of respectful affection &c.<sup>89</sup>

---

89. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To MARQUIS DE LA ROUERIE<sup>90</sup>**

New York, October 13, 1789.

Dear Sir: I have been honored with the receipt of your letters of the 5th of October 1788 and 18th of June last; the former I only received a few days ago by Major de Berdt.

In answer to your observations respecting the monies due to your Officers from the United States, I can only express my regret that the political circumstances of the country have not heretofore capacitated a more punctual compliance with its engagements. But as there is a prospect that the finances of America will improve with the progression of its government, I can not but entertain a belief that the cause of the complaint will be removed and Confidence restored to our public Creditors. The measures to effect this desirable purpose must be proportioned to the means we possess: and altho' they may be slow, yet I trust they will be certain in their operation. I shall add to your satisfaction by informing you that the political affairs of the United States are in so pleasing a train as to promise respectability to our government and happiness to our Citizens.

The opposition offered to the reform of our federal Constitution...<sup>91</sup>

---

90. Charles Armand-Tuffin, Marquis de La Rouerie.

---

91. The omitted portion is the same as that found in Washington's letter to Comte de Rochambeau, Oct. 13, 1789, *q. v.*

I am much obliged by the flattering and Affectionate Sentiments expressed in your letters, and I request you to believe that I etc.<sup>92</sup>

---

92. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To COMTE D'ESTAING

New York, October 13, 1789.

Dear General: I have been honored with the receipt of your letter of the 8th of June, enclosing a list of Officers who wish to receive diplomas from the society of the Cincinnati.

General Knox will forward to your Excellency, by the Count de Moustier, who is so obliging as to favor this letter with his care, Diplomas for the first forty five names on your list, he has sent to the Commandant of the Squadron, now at Boston, Diplomas for the Vicomte de Pontever Glen,<sup>94</sup> Marquis de la Galisoniere,<sup>95</sup> Monsieur de Durand de Braije,<sup>96</sup> and the Marquis de Traversay,<sup>97</sup> and he hopes to obtain of sufficiency of Diplomas to complete your list, which he will transmit to you by the next Packet for France.



I am assured that I shall add to your Excellency's satisfaction by telling you that the political circumstances of the United States are in so pleasing a train as to promise respectability to their Government, and happiness to our Citizens.

The opposition offered to the reform of our federal Constitution...<sup>98</sup>

---

94. Henri Jean Baptiste, Vicomte de Pontevès-Giens.

---

95. Athanase Scipion Barrin, Marquis de La Galissonnière.

---

96. Jean Baptiste Alexandre Durand de Braye.

---

97. Jean Baptiste Prévost de Sensac, Marquis de Traversay.

---

98. The omitted portion is the same as that found in Washington's letter to Comte de Rochambeau, Oct. 13, 1789, *q. v.*

With sentiments of respectful Affection and esteem, I have the honor etc.<sup>99</sup>

---

99. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **\*To THOMAS JEFFERSON**

New York, October 13, 1789.

Sir: In the selection of characters to fill the important offices of Government in the United States I was naturally led to contemplate the talents and disposition which I knew you to possess and entertain for the Service of your Country. And without being able to consult your inclination, or to derive any knowledge of your intentions from your letters either to myself or to any other of your friends, I was determined, as well by motives of private regard as a conviction of public propriety, to nominate you for the Department of State, which, under its present organization, involves many of the most interesting objects of the Executive Authority. But grateful as your acceptance of this Commission would be to me, I am at the sametime desirous to accommodate to your wishes, and I have therefore forborne to nominate your Successor at the Court of Versailles until I should be informed of your determination.

Being on the eve of a journey through the Eastern States, with a view to observe the situation of the Country, and in a hope of perfectly reestablishing my health, which a series of indisposition has much impaired, I have deemed it proper to make this communication of your appointment in order that you might lose no time should it be your [wish] to visit

Virginia during the recess of Congress, which will probably be the most convenient season, both as it may respect your private concerns and the public service.

Unwilling as I am to interfere in the direction of your choice of Assistants, I shall only take the liberty of observing to you that, from warm recommendations which I have received in behalf of Roger Alden, Esqr., Assistant Secretary to the late Congress, I have placed all the Papers thereunto belonging under his care. Those Papers which more properly appertain to the Office of Foreign-Affairs are under the Superintendence of Mr. Jay, who has been so-obliging as to continue his good-offices, and they are in the immediate charge of Mr. Remson.<sup>6</sup> With sentiments of very great esteem and regard, &c.

I take this occasion to acknowledge the receipt of your several favors of the 4th and 5th Deer. of the last, and 10th. of May of the present year and to thank you for the communications therein.<sup>7</sup>

---

6. Henry Remson, jr.

---

7. From the original in the *Jefferson Papers* in the Library of Congress.

Jefferson's letter of December 15 from Chesterfield, Va., acknowledged this, and Washington's letter to Jefferson of November 30 stated: "When I contemplate the extent of that office, embracing as it does the principal mass of domestic administration, together with the foreign, I cannot be insensible of my inequality to it...but it is not for an individual to chuse his post. you are to marshal us as may best be for the public good: and it is only in case of it's being indifferent to you that I would avail myself of the option you have so kindly offered in your letter. if you think it better to transfer me to another post, my inclination must be no obstacle; nor shall it be, if there is any desire to suppress the office I now hold, or to reduce it's grade. in either of these cases be so so good as to signify to me by another line your ultimate wish, and I shall conform to it cordially. if it should be to remain at New York, my chief comfort will be to work under your eye, my only shelter the authority of your name, and the wisdom of measures to be dictated by you, and implicitly executed by me. whatever you may please to decide, I do not see that the matters which have called me hither will permit me to shorten the stay I originally asked; that is to say, to set out on my journey Northward till the month of March.

as early as possible in that month, I shall have the honor of paying my respects to you in New York." This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

Madison, in a letter dated Georgetown, Md. (D. C.), Jan. 4, 1790, reported to the President his reaction to Jefferson's feeling as follows: "A few days before I was allowed to set out for N. York, I took a ride to Monticello. The answer of Mr. Jefferson to the notification of his appointment will no doubt have explained the state of his mind on the subject. I was sorry to find them so little biased in favor of the domestic service allotted to him, but was glad that his difficulties seemed to result chiefly from what I take to be an erroneous view of the kind and quantity of business annexed to that which constituted the foreign department. He apprehends that it will far exceed the latter which has of itself no terrors to him. On the other hand it was supposed, and I believe truly that the domestic part will be very trifling, and for that reason improper to be made a distinct department. After all if the whole business can be executed by one man, Mr. Jefferson must be equal to it; If not he will be relieved by a necessary division of it. All whom I have heard speak on the subject are remarkably solicitous for his acceptance, and I flatter myself that they will not in the final event be disappointed." Madison's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

## To GOVERNOR JOHN HANCOCK

Brookfield, October 22, 1789.<sup>11</sup>

Sir: A few miles west of this village I met the express, who delivered me your Excellency's letter of yesterday. I have been so fortunate as to proceed thus far, without any accident to delay my journey; should nothing occur to prevent me, I shall be at Weston to-morrow night, and I purpose taking dinner so early at Watertown on Saturday, as to reach Cambridge by half past two O'clock. Thence I presume we shall arrive within an hour at Boston.

I am highly sensible of the honor intended me: But could my wish prevail I should desire to visit your Metropolis without any parade, or extraordinary ceremony. From a wish to avoid giving trouble to private families, I determined, on leaving New York, to decline the honor of any invitation to quarters which I might receive while on my journey; and with a view to observe this rule, I had requested a Gentleman to engage lodgings for me during my stay at Boston. I beg your Excellency to be persuaded of the grateful sense which I entertain of the honor you intended to confer on me, and I desire to assure you of the respectful regard with which I am &c.<sup>12</sup>

---

11. Washington reached Brookfield, Mass., on this date, but continued on to Spencer, 10 miles farther, where he lodged that night at Isaac Jenks's tavern.

---

12. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

---

### To GOVERNOR JOHN HANCOCK

Weston, October 23, 1789.<sup>13</sup>

Sir: I have this moment received your Excellency's polite letter of to-day, and have the honor to inform you, that, in consequence of suggestions made by the Gentlemen from Boston and the Deputy Adjut. General (whom I met at Worcester this morning) that it would make it more convenient for the troops, many of whom lived at a distance from the place of parade, if I should pass through Cambridge at an earlier hour than I intended, I thought it best to alter the time of my arrival at that place, which I had the pleasure to mention to your Excellency in my letter of yesterday; and the alteration which I had made I immediately communicated to you by a letter, which the Gentlemen from Boston were so kind as to take charge of; but lest any accident should prevent that letter from getting to your hands I would here mention, that it is my determination to be at Cambridge to-morrow at 10 O'clock, and from thence proceed to Boston as soon as circumstances will permit, where it is probable I may arrive by 12 o'clock, and I will do myself the honor to accept your Excellency's polite invitation of taking an informal dinner with you.<sup>14</sup> I have the honor &c.<sup>15</sup>

---

13. Washington lodged at Weston the night of October 23 and left it at 8 a. m., October 24. According to schedule he reached Cambridge at 10 a. m.; but the militia was not ready until 11 a.m. A conflict over local precedence delayed his entry into Boston. Lieut. Gov. Samuel Adams, who had been sent by the Governor to welcome the President at the town limits, encountered opposition from the town authorities, who claimed the right to welcome the President to the town. Adams was forced to give way. The details of this controversy are in Washington's "Diaries."

---

14. Hancock, not having paid the President the first visit, Washington canceled the dinner acceptance and dined at his lodgings which were at Mrs. Ingersoll's, widow of Joseph Ingersoll, corner of Tremont and Court Streets. Vice President John Adams dined with him. On Sunday, October 25, Governor Hancock called on the President, assuring him that indisposition alone had prevented his doing it before.

On Washington's tour of New England, which did not, however, include Rhode Island and Vermont, presumably because those two States were not then members of the Union, various States, towns, and organizations presented him with complimentary addresses to which answers were returned. These, in the order of their dates, were: From the Connecticut Legislature [October 17]; from the Congregational ministers of New Haven, October 17; from the mayor, aldermen, and common council of Hartford [October 20]; from the Governor and Council of Massachusetts, October 27; from the inhabitants of Boston [October 27]; from the president and fellows of Harvard University, October 27; from the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati, October 27; from the inhabitants of Marblehead, October 29; from the inhabitants of Salem, October 29; from the citizens of Newburyport [October 30]; from the inhabitants of Portsmouth, N. H., November 2; from the executive of New Hampshire, at Portsmouth, November 3; from the ministers and elders representing the Massachusetts and New Hampshire churches which compose the First Presbytery of the Eastward, Newburyport, October 28. All of the above addresses and answers are recorded consecutively in the "Letter Book," with the exception of this last one from the ministers and elders, etc., which, though dated October 28, is recorded after November 3. In Washington's reply to this, he wrote: "I am persuaded, you will permit me to observe that the path of true piety is so plain as to require but little political direction. To this consideration we ought to ascribe the absence of any regulation, respecting religion, from the Magna-Charta of our country. To the guidance of the ministers of the gospel this important object is, perhaps, more properly committed. It will be your care to instruct the ignorant, and to reclaim the devious, and, in the progress of morality and science, to which our government will give every furtherance, we may confidently expect the advancement of true religion, and the completion of our happiness."

---

15. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To MATTHEW WHITING

New York, November 18, 1789.

Sir: Since my return from the Eastward I received your letter respecting your Son, Had I received it sooner, it should have been answered sooner.

Upon the receipt of it I immediately made application to the Office of Foreign Affairs, from whence alone any information upon such a subject could be derived. A Copy of the report from that Office you will receive with this. Whatever means of affording assistance in cases like this I may be possessed of, shall be most chearfully exerted, and if the desired end could be attained, I should

receive great pleasure from it. The only channel through which at present, (as I have just above observed) any information can be procured, is the Office of Foreign Affairs, nor do I know or believe that any other will present itself, unless it be thro' Mr. Jefferson the American Minister at the Court of France, whom I daily expect here on his return from thence. But here give me leave to advise you not to cherish too fondly your hopes. I know full well that persons of that description from whom you have accounts of your Son's being in captivity at Algiers, make a practice of fabricating such tales, with a view of getting money from those, to whom, the persons of whom they give such accounts, are related. This has been done in other instances. I well know too that small circumstances will induce and encourage great hopes, where the object of our hopes is the object of our love and strongest Affection. I am etc.<sup>23</sup>

---

23. Dated October in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

## To WILLIAM DRAYTON

New York, November 18, 1789.

Sir: The office of Judge of the District Court in and for South Carolina District having become vacant; I have appointed you to fill the same, and your Commission therefor is enclosed. You will observe that the commission, which is now transmitted to you, is limited to the end of the next Session of the Senate of the United States. This is rendered necessary by the Constitution of the United States, which authorizes the President of the United States to fill up such vacancies as may happen during the recess of the Senate and appointments so made shall expire at the end of the ensuing Session unless confirmed by the Senate; however there cannot be the smallest doubt but the Senate will readily ratify and confirm this appointment, when your Commission in the usual form shall be forwarded to you.

I presume, Sir, it is unnecessary for me to advance any arguments to shew the high importance of the Judicial System to our National Government, and of course the necessity of having respectable and influential Characters placed in the important offices of it. The love which you bear our Country will, I am persuaded lead you to do every thing in your power to promote its welfare; and upon this principle I flatter myself you will accept the above appointment. I am &c.<sup>22</sup>

---

22. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**\*To GOVERNOR BEVERLEY RANDOLPH**

New York, November 22, 1789.

Sir: From the original letter, which I forward herewith, Your Excellency will comprehend the nature of a prospect for introducing and establishing the Woolen Manufactory in the State of Virginia. In the present stage of population and agriculture, I do not pretend to determine, how far that Plan may be practicable and advisable; or, in case it should be deemed so, whether any or what public encouragement ought to be given to facilitate its execution. I have, however, no doubt as to the good policy of encreasing the number of Sheep in every State. By a little Legislative encouragement, the Farmers of Connecticut have, in two years past, added one hundred thousand to their former stock. In my late tour through the Eastern States, I found that the Manufacturers of Woollens (for the Manufacture of Woollens is carried on there to very considerable extent and advantage) preferred the Wool raised in Virginia for its fineness, to that raised in more Northern parts of the Continent. If a greater quantity of Wool could be produced, and if the hands (which are often in a manner idle) could be employed in the manufacturing it; a spirit of industry might be promoted, a great diminution might be made in the annual expences of individual families, and the

Public would eventually be exceedingly benefitted.

Under these impressions I have thought proper to transmit the Proposal; and will only add, that, if it should be judged expedient to submit the subject to the Legislature, or if any private Company should engage in promoting the business, the necessity of keeping the Manufacturer's name concealed would undoubtedly occur: as a premature knowledge of it might not only frustrate the success of the Project, but also subject the Person principally concerned to the most distressing consequences. I have the honor etc.

[H.S.P]

**To JOHN MARSHALL**

New York, November 23, 1789.

Sir: Upon my return to this place from a tour through the eastern States, I met your letter of the 14th Ultro, giving me information of your declining the appointment of Attorney for the district of Virginia, and assigning the reasons for so doing.

Your name was mentioned to me for that Office by Colo. Samuel Griffin as a request of your own, to which my feelings assented with peculiar pleasure, and I am sorry that circumstances are such as render your acceptance of the Appointment incompatible with your business.

As some other person must be appointed to fill the office of Attorney for the district of Virginia it is proper your Commission should be returned to me. I am etc.<sup>27</sup>

---

27. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To RICHARD CARY<sup>28</sup>**

New York, November 23, 1789.

Sir: When I was in Boston I received your letter of the 27th of October enclosing a Pamphlet<sup>29</sup> relating to donations which were made by Colo. Alford<sup>30</sup> for civilizing and christianizing the Indians, and for other valuable purposes. My time was so occupied while on my tour to the eastward that it was not in my power to make an acknowledgment for this mark of polite attention 'till my return to this place, and I now beg you to accept it. I am etc.<sup>31</sup>

---

28. Of Charleston, S. C.

---

29. This pamphlet is in the *Washington Papers* under date of May 28, 1789.

---

30. John Alford.

---

31. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR**

New York, November 23, 1789.



Sir: Your letter of the 24th of October, containing an estimate of the cost of a Light-house which was to have been erected on Cape Henry; a draft of the same, and an Account of materials placed upon the spot for the purpose of building, has been duly received; and I beg you to accept my thanks for your trouble in preparing and forwarding them. I am etc.<sup>31</sup>

---

31. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To COLONEL SOLOMON BUSH<sup>35</sup>**

New York, November 24, 1789.

Sir: Your letters of the 30th of July and 5th of August have been received.

I beg your acceptance of my thanks for the congratulations which you offer upon my election to the Office of President of the United States, and the good wishes which you express for my personal happiness.

In your letters you mention the seizure of a Ship from New York, and her being afterwards liberated by a proper and spirited conduct. As a Citizen of the United States of America I offer you my thanks for the assistance which you afforded towards saving the property of our Countrymen. I am etc.

P. S. Nov. 24th. Since writing the above, I have received your letter of the 4th of October by Mr. Trumbull, together with the book accompanying it, for which I request you to present my thanks to Mr. Bush, at whose desire it was forwarded, and accept the same for your trouble in transmitting it.<sup>36</sup>

---

35. Of London.

---

36. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To EDWARD RUTLEDGE**

New York, November 23, 1789.

Dear Sir: I have been favored with your letter of the 31st Ultimo, and am very happy to learn, that the appointments under the general Government have given so much satisfaction in your part of the Union. Added to the consciousness of having brought forward such Characters only to fill the several Offices in the United States, as from my own knowledge, or the strictest enquiries I conceived would do justice to the public, and honor to themselves, I have the happiness to find, so far as my information extends, that they are highly acceptable to the good people of this Country.

Your Brother's<sup>32</sup> acceptance of his appointment has given me much pleasure; and I should have been glad, if Major Pinckney<sup>33</sup> could have found it compatible with his interest to hold the Office of District Judge; however, I am persuaded the duties of that Office will be ably and faithfully discharged by Mr. Drayton whom I have appointed to fill it, in consequence of your warm recommendation of him, and the concurrent testimony given of his abilities and integrity by those Gentlemen who are acquainted with him, and who have spoken to me on the subject. I am &c.<sup>34</sup>

---

32. John Rutledge. He had been appointed one of the associate justices of the Supreme Court.

---

33. Thomas Pinckney.

---

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

---

## **To ROBERT HANSON HARRISON**

New York, November 25, 1789.

Dear Sir: Since my return from my Tour through the eastern States, I have received your two letters, dated the 27th of last month; together with the Commission which had been sent to you as a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. I find that one of the reasons, which induced you to decline the appointment, rests on an idea that the Judicial Act will remain unaltered. But in respect to that circumstance, I may suggest to you, that such a change in the System is contemplated, and deemed expedient by many in, as well as out of Congress, as would permit you to pay as much attention to your private affairs as your present station does.

As the first Court will not sit until the first Monday in February, I have thought proper to return your Commission, not for the sake of urging you to accept it contrary to your interest or convenience, but with a view of giving you a farther opportunity of informing yourself of the nature and probability of the change alluded to. This you would be able to do with the less risk of mistake, if you should find

it convenient to pass some time here, when a considerable number of Members of both Houses of Congress shall have Assembled; and this might be done before it would become indispensable to fill the place offered to you. If, on the other hand, your determination

is absolutely fixed, you can, without much trouble, send back the Commission, under cover.

Knowing as you do the candid part, which I wish to Act on all occasions; you will, I am persuaded, do me the justice to attribute my conduct in this particular instance to the proper motives, when I assure you, that I would not have written this letter if I had imagined it would produce any new embarrassment on your part. On the contrary you may rest assured, that I shall be perfectly satisfied with whatever determination may be consonant to your best judgment, and most agreeable to yourself.<sup>37</sup> I am &c.

P. S. As you may wish to know the determination of the other Associate Judges of the Supreme Court, I have the pleasure to inform you that all of them have accepted their Appointments.<sup>38</sup>

---

37. Harrison again declined and James Iredell, of North Carolina, was appointed.

---

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **\*To THOMAS JEFFERSON**

New York, November 30, 1789.

Dear Sir: You will perceive by the enclosed letter (which was left for you at the office of Foreign affairs when I made a journey to the Eastern States) the motives on which I acted with regard to yourself, and the occasion of my explaining them at that early period. Having now reason to hope, from Mr. Trumbulls report, that you will be arrived at Norfolk before this time (on which event I would most cordially congratulate you) and having a safe conveyance by Mr. Griffin, I forward your Commission to Virginia; with a request to be made acquainted with your sentiments as soon as you shall find it convenient to communicate them to me. With sentiments of very great esteem &c.<sup>40</sup>

---

40. From the original in the *Jefferson Papers* in the Library of Congress. (See note to Washington's letter to Thomas Jefferson, Oct. 13, 1789, ante.)

**To REVEREND JOHN RODGERS**

New York, November 28, 1789.

Sir: By direction of the President of the United States, I have the pleasure to send you twenty five dollars to be applied towards relieving the poor of the Presbyterian Churches.

A paragraph in the papers mentioned that a Contribution would be made for that purpose on Thanksgiving day; as no opportunity offered of doing it at that time, and not knowing in whose hands the money should be lodged which might be given afterwards. The President of the United States has directed me to send it to you, requesting that you will be so good as to put it into the way of answering the charitable purposes for which it is intended. I am etc.<sup>39</sup>

---

39. This letter, signed "Tobias Lear," is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

**To JAMES McHENRY**

(Confidential)

New York, November 30, 1789.

Dear Sir: I have received your letter of the 14th inst, and in consequence of the suggestions contained therein, added to other considerations which occurred to me, I have thought it best to return Judge Harrison<sup>42</sup> his Commission, and I sincerely hope that upon a further consideration of the subject he may be induced to revoke his former determination and accept the appointment.

Mr. Johnson<sup>43</sup> has likewise declined his appointment of District Judge, and I have no information of Mr. Potts,<sup>44</sup> the Attorney, or Mr. Ramsey<sup>45</sup> the Marshall, having accepted their Commissions. Thus circumstanced with respect to Maryland, I am unwilling to make a new appointment of Judge for that District until I can have an assurance, or at least a strong presumption, that the person appointed will accept; for it is to me an unpleasant thing to have Commissions of so important a nature returned; and it will, in fact, have a tendency to bring the Government into discredit.

Mr. Hanson<sup>46</sup> is the person whom I now have it in contemplation to bring forward as District Judge of Maryland, and shall do so, provided I can obtain an assurance that such an appointment would be acceptable to him: But as I cannot take any direct measures to draw from him a sentiment on this head, I must request, my dear Sir, that you will be so good as to get for me, if you can, such information upon the subject as will enable me to act with confidence in it, and convey the same to me as soon as possible.

---

42. Robert Hanson Harrison.

---

43. Thomas Johnson.

---

44. Richard Potts.

---

45. Nathaniel Ramsey (Ramsay).

---

46. Alexander Contee Hanson.

I shall leave to your prudence and discretion the mode of gaining this knowledge. It is a delicate matter and will not bear any thing like a direct application if there is the least doubt of a refusal. I have observed in the papers that Mr. Hanson has been appointed Chancellor of the State since the death of Mr. Rogers.<sup>47</sup> What the emoluments of this office are, or its tenure, I know not, therefore can form no opinion how *far* it may operate in this matter.

>

Mr. Johnston's resignation came to hand too late to admit of a new appointment, and information to be given of it, before the time fixed by the act for holding the first district Court in Maryland; however, if this had not been the case, I should hardly have hazarded a new appointment, for the reasons before mentioned, until I had good grounds to believe it would be accepted.

Should it be found that the office of District Judge would not be acceptable to Mr. Hanson: Mr. Paca<sup>48</sup> has been mentioned for that appointment, and altho' his sentiments have not been altogether in favor of the General Government, and a little adverse on the score of Paper emissions etc. I do not know but his appointment on some other accounts might be a proper thing. However, this will come more fully under consideration if Mr. Hanson should not wish to be brought forward; and, in that case, I will thank you to give me information relative to Mr. Paca. Mr. Gustavus Scott and Mr. Robert Smith

47. John Rogers.

---

48. William Paca.

of Baltimore have also been mentioned for the Office; but the age and inexperience of the latter is in my opinion an insuperable objection. For however good the qualifications or promising the talents of Mr. Smith may be, it will be expected that the important offices of the General Government, and more especially those of the Judges should be filled by men who have been tried and proved. I thank you, my dear Sir, for your kind wishes for my health and happiness, and reciprocate them with sincerity. With very great regard &c.<sup>49</sup>

---

49. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To EDMUND RANDOLPH**

New York, November 30, 1789.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 8th of October gave me pleasure, as I not only entertain hopes, but shall fully expect from the contents of it, to see you in the office of Attorney General when the purposes mentioned by you for the delay are answered.

I shall now mention some matters to you in confidence. Mr. Pendleton declining to accept the appointment of District Judge has embarrassed me, and this embarrassment was not a little increased by the lateness of the period at which (being on a tour through the Eastern States) I came to the knowledge of it. When I was about to make the nominations in the Judiciary for the Union, the character and abilities of Mr. Wythe<sup>50</sup> did not escape me, and I accordingly consulted such Gentlemen from the State of Virginia (then in this City) as I thought most likely to have some knowledge of his Inclinations. Their opinion was, that as he had lately been appointed sole Chancellor (an Office to which by inclination he was led) and engaged in other avocations which engrossed his attentions and appeared to afford him pleasure he would not exchange the former for a federal appointment. However, since these appointments have been announced, I have heard that it has been the wonder of some, in Virginia, that Mr. Wythe should have been *overlooked*. The cause (if the

---

50. George Wythe.

---

epithet applies) I have assigned. And if there was reason to apprehend a refusal in the first instance, the nonacceptance of Colo. Pendleton would be no inducement to him to come forward in the second. To consult him, through the medium of a friend, there was not time, as the 3d Tuesday in December is the day appointed for holding the District Court in the District of Virginia, and to hazard a second refusal I was, on many accounts, unwilling to do. Under these circumstances I have, by the powers of the Constitution, appointed Mr. Cyrus Griffin during the recess of the Senate.

My reasons for this appointment in preference to any other except Mr. Wythe are, because he has (as I am informed) been regularly bred to the Law; has been in the Court of appeals; Has been discontinued of the Council in Virginia (contrary to the expectation of his friends here at the time, who thought that his temporary appointment as a negotiator with the southern Indians would not bring him under the disqualifying law of Virginia) and thereby thrown entirely out of employment, and because I had it in my power to ascertain with precision his acceptance. I shall say nothing of his being a Man of amiable character and of competent abilities, because in these respects some of the present Judges in that State may be his equals; but to what I have said, may be added, he has no employment now, and *needs* the emolument of one as much as any of them.

I will not conceal from you, that two motives have induced me to give this explanation. The first, if a favorable opportunity should present itself is, that Mr. Wythe may, in a delicate manner, be informed of the principles by which I was governed in this business; the second, that my inducements to appoint Mr. Griffin may

not (if the propriety of it should be questioned) be altogether unknown. For having in every appointment endeavored, as far as my own knowledge of Characters extended, or information could be obtained, to select the fittest and most acceptable Persons; and having reason to believe that the appointments which have been made heretofore have given very general satisfaction it would give me pain if Mr. Wythe or any of his friends should conceive that he has been passed by from improper motives. I have prejudices against none, nor partialities which shall bias me in favor of any one. If I err then, my errors will be of the head and not of the heart of my dear Sir, your most obedient &c.<sup>51</sup>

---

51. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On December 23 Randolph wrote to Washington: "I found a fortunate moment for a conversation with Mr. Wythe. He repeated what I wrote to you in answer to your favor of the 30th. Ulto. Indeed he declared himself happy in believing, that he held a place in your esteem; and that he was confident, you had looked towards him with every partiality, which he could wish. Nay without going into the

detail of our discourse, I am convinced from his own mouth, that the knowledge of his present situation is considered by him, as the only reason of a seat on the bench, not being tendered to him." Randolph's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

## To ROBERT MORRIS

New York, December 14, 1789.

Dear Sir: I have been favored with the receipt of your letter of the 9th instant.<sup>54</sup> In reply to the object of its enclosure, I can only observe that Mr. Hamilton is a Gentleman of whom I am inclined to think well, and to believe qualified for the office he solicits: But the rule which I have prescribed to myself, being intended to preserve a freedom of choice in all nominations, forbids any engagement whatever until the nomination is made.

I beg you to accept my best thanks for the obliging offer which you made, through Major Jackson, of accomodating me with a steward, and I regret that circumstances do not permit me to prove to you my belief of its sincerity: But the multiplied duties of the station would, I apprehend, be too fatiguing for a Person as far advanced as Constance, and Anthony's youth would disqualify him from obtaining the necessary authority over the other servants, all of whom are so much his seniors. I am very sensible of your goodness in agreeing to promote my convenience at the expence of your own, and I am not less grateful than if the intention had been fulfill'd. Be pleased to present Mrs. Washington's, and my compliments to Mrs. Morris, and believe me with great regard, Dr. Sir etc.<sup>55</sup>

---

54. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

---

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To GOVERNOR BEVERLEY RANDOLPH

New York, December 14, 1789.

Sir: I was surprized to find by your Excellency's letter of the 1st instant, with which I have been duly favored, that my dispatches of the 3d of October did not reach you until the last day of November; and in consequence thereof I have enquired of the Post Master in this City to know if they were detained in his office. He informs me they were not, and as a proof of it, he refers to the stamp on



the face of the letters which will shew the day of their leaving his office, and I will thank you for your own, and my satisfaction to examine the same.

The detention of these letters is a matter of some importance not only as it respects them, but as to the general regulation of the post Office; and I wish exceedingly to know where they were detained, and whether it was owing to the inattention of any Post Master through whose hands they must have passed, or to a worse cause. An investigation and discovery of this matter may prevent future offences of the like nature. You will therefore oblige me, Sir, and render a service to the public, by using your endeavors to know the cause of their detention. I have the honor etc.<sup>56</sup>

---

56. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To GOVERNOR SAMUEL HUNTINGTON**

New York, December 23, 1789.

Sir: I have been favored with your Excellency's letter of the 19th Ultimo,<sup>62</sup> recommending General Sage<sup>63</sup> to supply the place of Mr. Miller as Surveyor of the Port of Middletown in the State of Connecticut, provided the latter should resign his Office. I have also received a letter from Genl. Sage applying for the appointment, if the office should become vacant. But having had no intimation from Mr. Miller of his intention to resign, I cannot at present, with propriety, take any further notice of the application in behalf of Genl. Sage than to acknowledge the receipt of it. I am etc.<sup>64</sup>

---

62. Huntington's letter is in the *Application for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

---

63. Comfort Sage.

---

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To PRESIDENT JOSEPH WILLARD<sup>65</sup>**

New York, December 23, 1789.

Sir: Your letter of the 7th Ultimo was handed to me a few days since by Mr. Savage,<sup>66</sup> who is now engaged in taking the Portrait which you, and the Governors of the Seminary over which you preside, have expressed a desire for, that it may be placed in the Philosophy Chamber of your University. I am induced, Sir, to comply with this request from a wish that I have to gratify, so far as with propriety may be done, every reasonable desire of the Patrons and promoters of Science. And at the same time, I feel myself flattered by the polite manner in which I am requested to give this proof of my sincere regard and good wishes for the prosperity of the University of Cambridge. I am etc.<sup>67</sup>

---

65. President of Harvard College.

---

66. Edward Savage.

---

67. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To CLEMENT GOSSELIN**

New York, December 23, 1789.

Sir: I have received (tho' a long time after its date) your letter of the 7th of September, in which you request my interference or assistance to obtain for you a rifle to Land ceded by the State of New York to the Canadian Refugees. Notwithstanding it is my sincere wish, that all those who suffered losses, or rendered services to the American cause, in the late War, should be suitably recompensed and rewarded, yet my present situation forbids any interference, on my part, with the doings of an individual State, unless called thereto by my official duty; I have therefore directed a copy of your letter to be given to Governor Clinton who is undoubtedly acquainted with the circumstances of the case which you have stated. I am &c.<sup>64</sup>

---

64. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To REVEREND JOSEPH BUCKMINSTER<sup>68</sup>**

New York, December 23, 1789.

Sir: Your letter of the 27th of November and the discourse which it enclosed have been duly received.<sup>69</sup>

I consider the sermon<sup>70</sup> on the death of Sir William Pepperell which you were so good as to send me by desire of Lady Pepperell his Relict, as a mark of attention from her which required my particular acknowledgments; and I am sorry that the death of that Lady which I see is announced in the public papers prevents my thanks being returned to her for her respect and good wishes. You, Sir, will please to accept them for your goodness in forwarding the discourse, and my request, that they may be added to the Revd. Author<sup>71</sup> with my approbation of the Doctrine therein inculcated. I am etc.<sup>72</sup>

---

68. Of New Hampshire.

---

69. Buckminster's letter is in the *Washington Papers*, but a copy of the sermon is not found therein.

---

70. The sermon was printed in Boston in 1759, the year of Pepperrell's death, under the title, "A Sermon occasioned by the death of the Honourable Sir William Pepperell etc."

---

71. Rev. Benjamin Stevens, of Kittery (now Maine).

---

72. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To WILLIAM FITZHUGH

New York, December 24, 1789.

Dear Sir: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant which announced to us the disagreeable intelligence of Mrs. Platers<sup>73</sup> death. Mrs. Washington and myself sincerely condole with you, your Lady and the other friends of Mrs. Plater, upon this melancholy event.

Mr. Johnson has, as you supposed, declined the appointment of Judge to the District of Maryland, and I have lately appointed Mr. Paca to fill that office. Mr. Thomas<sup>74</sup> whom you recommend for that place undoubtedly possesses all those qualifications which you have ascribed to him, and so far as my own knowledge of that Gentleman extends, he is justly entitled to the reputation which he sustains. But in appointing persons to office, and more especially in the Judicial Department, my views have been much guided to those characters who have been conspicuous in their Country;

not only from an impression of their services, but upon a consideration that they had been tried, mad that a readier confidence would be placed in them by the public than in others perhaps of equal merit, who had never been proved. Upon this principle Mr. Paca certainly stands prior to Mr. Thomas, altho' the latter may possess in as high a degree every qualification requisite in a Judge. With very sincere regard etc.<sup>75</sup>

---

73. Mrs. George Plater (Elizabeth Rousby), of Calvert County, Md.

---

74. John Allen Thomas. Fitzhugh's letter of November 14, recommending him, is in *The Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

---

75. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On December 24 Lear, by Washington's direction, sent \$10 to Rev. John Henry Livingston, of the Dutch Reformed Church, in New York City, for the charity school attached thereto. Lear's letter is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On this same day (December 24) the President forwarded to William Paca the commission of judge of the district court for Maryland in a letter which is practically the same as that to William Drayton, Nov. 18, 1789, *q. v.*

## To JABEZ BOWEN

New York, December 27, 1789.

Sir: The letters with which you have been pleased to favor me, dated in Octr. and the 15th. of the present month came duly to hand, and are entitled to my thanks for the communications contained in them. As it is possible the conduct of Rhode Island (if persevered in) may involve questions in Congress which will call for my Official decisions, it is not fit that I should express more than a wish, in reply to your letter, than that the Legislature at the coming Session would consider *well* before it again rejects the proposition for calling a Convention to decide on their accession to or rejection of the present Government. The adoption of it by No Carolina has left them *entirely* alone. I am much obliged to you for your good wishes, and with esteem and regard I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

**To BARON DE POELLNITZ**

New York, December 29, 1789.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 26th,<sup>76</sup> and given such attention to the Manuscript which accompanied it, as my obligations to public duties would permit. I shall always be happy to see experiments in Agricultural machines, which can be brought into general use. Of those in your possession I was not able to form a decided judgment, except in the instance of the Horse Hoe. Of the utility of that instrument I was fully convinced. I propose to take some farther occasion of seeing the manner in which the threshing machine operates, when you shall let me know it is in readiness for the purpose, and in the mean time, I am, with due consideration, &c.<sup>77</sup>

---

76. The Baron's letter is dated at New York, and is in the *Washington Papers*.

---

77. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

At some unknown date (presumably in 1789) Secretary Knox drafted a proposed message to the Senate for the President on the subject of a treaty with the Wabash Indians. It is in the *Washington Papers* under date of December(?), 1789, and in the writing of a clerk in the War Department. It is indorsed by Knox "Notes submitted to the President (—useless)—," and is published in full in the *Territorial Papers of the United States* (Carter, editor), vol. 2, p. 227.

Also, there is, in the *Washington Papers*, at the end of the year 1780, a 4-page, folio tabular statement of crops, showing the work done at the Mount Vernon farms— plowing, seeding, planting, etc., together with a calculation of the costs of the plantings. It is labeled "First statement of the Crops in 1789."

In the Huntington Library is an undated and unaddressed note (probably sent to James Madison some time during the latter part of the year 1789): "As the Communications herewith enclosed will not take much time to read; As there are matters related which *to me* are new; and as the information respecting land transactions, and other things in the Western Country will require to be noticed and acted upon in some way or another, I send them to you together with a Gazette with a marked paragraph containing some suggestions that have not, I believe, been touched upon in any of the Papers I gave you yesterday, but are handed to you for the same purpose that they were, i. e. merely for Consideration."

On January 2 Washington replied to an address from the Society of the Cincinnati of South Carolina, in which he wrote: "Nor is it conceivable that any Member of the Community should be more worthy of the enjoyments of liberty, or more zealous to perpetuate its duration, than those who have so nobly and so successfully defended its standard in the new world." This reply is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

**To MARY KATHERINE GODDARD<sup>86</sup>**

New York, January 6, 1790.

Madam: In reply to your Memorial of the 23d. of December, which has been received, I can only observe, that I have uniformly avoided interfering with any appointments which do not require my official agency, and the Resolutions and Ordinances establishing the Post Office under the former Congress, and which have been recognized by the present Government, giving power to the Postmaster General to appoint his own Deputies, and making him accountable for their conduct, is an insuperable objection to my taking any part in this matter.

I have directed your Memorial to be laid before the Postmaster General, who will take such measures thereon as his Judgment may direct. I am etc.<sup>85</sup>

---

86. Of Baltimore, Md.

---

85. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To JOHN ELY<sup>92</sup>**

New York, January 9, 1790.

Sir: I have perused your letter to me dated the 25 of last month, together with the several Papers referred to therein.

Upon considering the state in which your Application to Congress rested at the conclusion of the former Government, and your intention of renewing it under the present; it occurs to me that it would not be proper for me to express any opinion on the merits of your individual case. In general

I may say, without impropriety, that I am not ignorant of your services in your Country's cause; and that it is always my wish that justice should take place. I am etc.<sup>93</sup>

---

92. Of Connecticut.

---

93. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To CHARLES THOMSON**

New York, January 10, 1790.

Sir: I have been duly favored with your letter of the 25th of December, and its enclosures.<sup>94</sup>

I thank you for the information which is given respecting the person whom you had recommended to me for notice. His conduct has been such as justly to exclude him from any place of confidence or trust; and it appears, from the copies of his letters which you have transmitted to me, that he is severely punished by his own reflections.

I return, with sincerity, the compliments of the season to yourself and Mrs. Thomson, in which I am joined by Mrs. Washington; and I heartily rejoice with you in the accession of North Carolina to the Government of the Union. With sentiments of sincere regard, I am etc.<sup>95</sup>

---

94. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

---

95. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To GOVERNOR CHARLES PINCKNEY**

(Private)

New York, January 11, 1790.

Dear Sir: Altho' it is not in my power to enter so fully as I could wish into an investigation of the interesting subjects discussed in your letter of the 14th<sup>98</sup> of last month; yet I would not deny

myself the satisfaction of acknowledging the receipt of it, and of expressing my obligations for the sentiments, which your Excellency has been pleased to suggest.

A new Monarch having succeeded to the Throne of Spain,<sup>99</sup> it remains to be ascertained how far his Court may insist upon those exclusive claims to the navigation of the Mississippi, which have hitherto prevented the conclusion of a Treaty between the United States and that Nation. Mr. Gardoqui went to Spain some time ago: nor have we received any thing official from thence since his departure. A private Gentleman, (a man of good intelligence) lately returned from Spain to America, mentions a report was believed when he sailed, that the Americans of the United States had formed a successful expedition against the spanish territory in their neighborhood; and that the report had occasioned great sensations in the Kingdom. Whatever may be the future policy of that Nation, I am disposed to become as well acquainted with the merits of the subjects which have been agitated between them and us since the war, as my other duties and avocations will admit. For this reason in particular, I thank your Excellency for your confidential communication.

---

98. In the *Washington Papers*.

---

99. Charles IV, in December, 1788.

As to the subject of indian affairs, I can only say in general, that your sentiments on the expediency of entering into Treaties with those Nations, upon just terms, perfectly co-incide with my own. From the official report of the late Commissioners for treating with the Creeks, &c. it seems almost certain, that the connection of Mr. McGillivray with Spain was the principal cause for preventing the conclusion of the proposed Treaty. Their report (which is this day to be delivered by the Secretary at War to the Senate) will indicate fully the progress and issue of that business. And the Executive will probably be possessed of such documents as may be useful in taking ulterior measures. For my own part, I am entirely persuaded, that the present general Government will endeavor to lay the foundation for its proceedings in national justice, faith and honor. But should the Government, after having attempted in vain every reasonable pacific measure, be obliged to have recourse to arms for the defence of its Citizens, I am also of opinion, that sound policy and good œconomy will point to a prompt and decisive effort, rather than to defensive and lingering operations.

Should your Excellency, after the expiration of your Office, prosecute your proposed voyage to France, you will find, I presume, most extraordinary events have taken place in that Kingdom. Altho' all their political arrangements are not yet settled; I hope they will be happily, before the period to which you allude.



My late tour through the eastern States has been of salutary consequence in confirming my health. I have likewise had an opportunity of seeing how far the Country is recovered from the ravages of war, and how well the Inhabitants are disposed to support the General Government.

Not being master of my own time, nor accustomed to make personal engagements, which from contingency might become impracticable I can only say in regard to the last paragraph of your letter, that nothing would give me greater pleasure than to have it in my power to visit all the Southern States. With sentiments of the highest respect etc.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To REVEREND JOHN C. KUNZE<sup>2</sup>**

New York, January 12, 1790.

Sir: The subject of your letter of the 4th instant enclosing one of the same date from Mr. Brown to you, appears to be of a nature requiring the operation of legislative power rather than any agency of mine at present. For however desirous I might be to promote the wishes of Mr. Brown, either from a view to benefit the public by attaching those Indians which he mentions to the United States, or to advance their temporal or spiritual good by his services among them, I could not with propriety give encouragement to his plan without the previous interference of the Legislature of the Union.

I can, therefore, only observe, that the opinion of those Gentlemen in Congress with whom you may be acquainted will enable you to judge of the proper means by which this business might be forwarded. I am etc.<sup>3</sup>

---

2. Of New York.

---

3. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To MARQUIS DE BELLEGARDE<sup>5</sup>**

New York, January 15, 1790.

Sir: I have received your letter dated the 18th of September 1789; and in reply to it, must inform you, that so far from living upon terms of intimacy and friendship with the late General Oglethorpe,<sup>6</sup> (as it appears by your letter you have understood that I did) I never was so happy as to have any personal acquaintance with that Gentleman, nor any other knowledge of him than from his general character. The distance of four places of residence from each other, which is nearly 1000 Miles, and the different periods in which we have lived are circumstances which preclude the probability of our having been upon an intimate footing.

I have, however, directed enquiries to be made among the Gentlemen from the State of Georgia, who are now attending Congress in this place, respecting the affairs of the late General Oglethorpe, and am informed by them, that they know of no lands belonging to him. One of the Gentlemen, a Senator from the State of Georgia, mentions his having been written to some time since, by Mr. Jefferson our Minister at the Court of Versailles, upon the same subject, and in consequence thereof he made every enquiry in his power relative to the matter; but there were no lands in Georgia belonging to General Oglethorpe; and he further adds, that if there had been property of that Gentleman's in Georgia in the time of the late War with Great Britain, so far from its having been confiscated, it would have met with singular protection, in consequence of the high estimation in which the character of Genl. Oglethorpe stood in that State. I should have been happy, Sir, to have it in my power to give you more pleasing information upon this subject. I am &c.<sup>7</sup>

---

5. Of Holland.

---

6. James Edward Oglethorpe.

---

7. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To DAVID FORMAN

New York, January 21, 1790.

Sir: Acknowledging the receipt of your letters of the 3d. and 18th instant,<sup>14</sup> I desire to assure you that I have not been inattentive to your communications.

In order that the most prudential steps might be taken on the subject, to which your letters related, they were laid before the Chief Justice of the United States, who thought that a reference of them to the Executive of this State was the most adviseable measure, and the accompanying letter, from

Governor Clinton to you, expresses his opinions of what ought to be done. The Governor thinks that the papers which were transmitted by you, will be necessary in the further prosecution of this matter, and he has, therefore, retained them.

This mark of your attention to public justice receives my best thanks. I am etc.<sup>15</sup>

---

14. On the subject of counterfeits of New York certificates.

---

15. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**\*To THOMAS JEFFERSON**

New York, January 21, 1790.

Dear Sir: I had the pleasure to receive duly your letter dated the 15th. of Decr. last; but I thought proper to delay answering or mentioning the contents of it, until after the arrival of Mr. Madison, who I understood had been with you. He arrived yesterday, and I now take the earliest opportunity of mentioning to you the result of my reflections; and the expediency of your deciding, at as early a period as may consist with your convenience, on the important subject before you.

Previous to any remarks on the nature of the Office to which you have been recently appointed, I will premise, that I feel such delicacy and embarrassment in consequence of the footing on which you have placed your final determination, as to make it necessary for me to recur to the first ground on which I rested the matter. In confidence, therefore, I will tell you plainly that I wish not to oppose your inclinations; and that, after you shall have been made a little farther acquainted with the light in which I view the Office of Secretary of State, it must be at your option to determine relative to your acceptance of it, or continuance in your Office abroad.

I consider the successful Administration of the general Government as an object of almost infinite consequence to the present and future happiness of the Citizens of the United States. I consider the Office of Secretary for the Department of State as very important on many accts: and I know of no person, who, in my judgment, could better execute the Duties of it than yourself. Its duties

will probably be not quite so arduous and complicated in their execution as you might have been led at the first moment to imagine. At least, it was the opinion of Congress, that, after the division of all the business of a domestic nature between the Departments of the Treasury, War and State that those wch. would be comprehended in the latter might be performed by the same Person, who

should have the charge of conducting the Department of foreign Affairs. The experiment was to be made; and if it shall be found that the fact is different, I have little doubt that a farther arrangement or division of the business in the Office of the Department of State will be made, in such manner as to enable it to be performed, under the superintendence of one man, with facility to himself, as well as with advantage and satisfaction to the Public. These observations, however, you will be pleased to remark are merely matters of opinion. But, in order that you may be the better prepared to make your ultimate decision on good grounds, I think it necessary to add one fact, which is this, so far as I have been able to obtain information from all quarters, your late appointment has given very extensive and very great satisfaction to the Public. My original opinion and wish may be collected from my nomination.

As to what you mention in the latter part of your letter, I can only observe, I do not know that any alteration is likely to take place in the Commission from the United States to the Court of France. The necessary arrangements with regard to our intercourse with Foreign Nations have never yet been taken up on a great scale by the Government: because the Department which comprehended Affairs of that nature has never been properly organized, so as to bring the business well and systematically before the Executive. If you shd. finally determine

to take upon yourself the duties of the Department of State, it would be highly requisite for you to come on immediately, as many things are required to be done while Congress is in Session rather than at any other time; and as, in that case, your presence might doubtless be much better dispensed with after a little time than at the present moment. Or, in all events, it will be essential that I should be informed of your conclusive option, so that, if you return to France, another Person may be, at as early a day as possible, nominated to fill the Department of State.<sup>16</sup> With sentiments of the highest regard etc.<sup>17</sup>

---

16. A press copy of Jefferson's letter of February 14, from Monticello, accepting the position of Secretary of State, is in the *Jefferson Papers*. On March 22 he entered upon the duties of that office.

---

17. From the *Jefferson Papers* in the Library of Congress.

## **To GOVERNOR BEVERLEY RANDOLPH**

New York, January 22, 1790.

Sir: As it is of considerable consequence to the Public that a letter which I have just written to Mr. Jefferson should reach him at as early a period as may be, and as I am unacquainted with any other certain channel of conveyance, I have taken the liberty of enclosing it to your Excellency. The importance of having it delivered to him with certainty and expedition, I hope will be considered as an apology for the trouble which may be occasioned by this measure. And even for the farther favor I am about to ask, of having it dispatched [ *sic* ] by a particular Messenger; in case no opportunity (that might with safety be depended upon) should present itself, of forwarding it in a short time from Richmond to Monticello. With sentiments of esteem, I have the honor etc.<sup>1</sup>

[V.S.L.]

---

1. In the writing of David Humphreys.

### **To PRESIDENT JOSEPH WILLARD**

New York, January 24, 1790.

Sir: I have been favored with the receipt of your letter of the first instant.<sup>5</sup> As no determination has yet been taken with respect to the erection of Hospitals for the reception of sick and disabled Seamen, the object to which your request relates is not before me.

At present I can only repeat the assurances, formerly given, that every thing in my power will be done, consistent with propriety, to promote the wishes of your learned Body on this subject. You will allow me, at the same time, to observe, that it might be well to make their wishes on this head known to the Gentlemen, who are in Congress, from the State of Massachusetts. With great regard, I am etc.<sup>4</sup>

---

5. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

---

4. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To CHIEF JUSTICE THOMAS McKEAN<sup>6</sup>**

New York, January 24, 1790.

Sir: I have been favored with the receipt of your letter of the 17th. instant together with its enclosure.<sup>7</sup>

As no determination has yet been taken respecting the erection of Hospitals for the reception of sick and disabled seamen, the object, to which your letter relates is not before me, and, as I have undeviatingly considered freedom of choice, in all nominations to office, essential to the public service, I am persuaded you will have the goodness to excuse an adherence to that sentiment on the present occasion, which forbids any previous engagement, however satisfactory the pretensions of the Gentleman who wishes the appointment. I am etc.<sup>8</sup>

---

6. Of Pennsylvania.

---

7. McKean's letter, together with George Buchanan's application for appointment as physician of the marine hospital to be established at Baltimore, are in the *Applications for Office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

---

8. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To GOVERNOR BEVERLEY RANDOLPH**

United States, January 29, 1790.

Sir: I have been duly favored with your Excellency's letter of the 14th instant, enclosing General Wood's report respecting the materials which were placed upon Cape Henry by the States of Virginia and Maryland for the purpose of building a Lighthouse; and have put both the letter and report into the hands of the Secretary of the Treasury, who is authorized by Law "to provide by contract, which shall be approved by the President of the United States, for building a Light-house near the entrance of Chesapeake Bay." I have also directed him to write to your Excellency upon the subject, and to take such steps in the business as may tend to a speedy accomplishment of the desired object.

In the first place it will be necessary that a deed of cession of the land upon which the Light house is to be erected, should be executed from the State of Virginia to the United States; and when this is accomplished, as the building of the Light-house is to be done by contract, it is probable that the person or persons who may contract for the building of it, will make such agreement for the

materials as to them shall seem proper; and in this case the expediency of their being purchased *immediately* by the United States will be superseded. I have the Honor etc.<sup>11</sup>

[V.S.L.]

---

11. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

On February 1 the President sent a brief message to the Senate and the House forwarding a copy of North Carolina's act of cession of certain western lands to the United States. The original was to be deposited in the Department of State, and with the deed of cession, Feb. 25, 1790, is now in the Library of Congress.

On February 4 Lear wrote to Jabez Bowen, by direction of the President, acknowledging the receipt of the resolve of the Rhode Island Legislature "requesting Congress to renew the indulgence before granted to the Navigation of that State...it is to be hoped that the adoption of the Constitution by the State of Rhode Island will, after this instance, render similar applications unnecessary from that State." Lear's letter is from a copy in the Toner Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

## **To THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

United States, February 6, 1790.

Sir: In obedience to the command of the President of the United States, I have the honor to enclose you a Letter from Messrs. Beauregard and Bourgeois respecting certain Bills of Exchange bought in the year 1780 by Cadet Sardet of New Orleans from Oliver Pollock Esqr. Agent for the State of Virginia.

The President of the United States wishes the opinion of the Attorney General of the United States upon the subject of the enclosed letter.<sup>12</sup> Whether it can be considered as in any manner relating to the General Government, or to the State of Virginia, or be viewed as a Mercantile transaction between two persons unconnected with the public. I have the honor etc.<sup>13</sup>

---

12. On February 16 Lear transmitted the report of the Attorney General on the matter to Toutant Beauregard and Bourgeois to Jabez Bowen. Lear's letter is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

13. This letter, signed "Tobias Lear," is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

New York, February 11, 1790.

Sir: I have weighed with deliberate attention the contents of your letter of yesterday; and, altho' that consideration may result in an approbation of the ideas therein suggested; yet I do not, at present, feel myself authorized to give a sanction to the measures which you propose. For, as the Constitution of the United States, and the Laws made under it, must mark the line of my official conduct, I could not justify my taking a single step in any matter, which appeared to me to require their agency, without its being first obtained; and, so far as I have been able to form a judgment upon the objects held up to view in your letter, they cannot be effected without the operation of a Law.

As an Act must necessarily be passed to extend the Judicial Power of the United States to the State of North Carolina, it appears to me that a clause might be there introduced to establish that uniformity and precision in the business of the United States in each district, which you observe is highly proper to be effected, and to make such other regulations as may be thought necessary. I, however, only suggest this idea to you, that you may, if you think proper, mention it to such members of the Senate and House of Representatives as are acquainted with the subject, and thereby have the matter brought to view whenever the above mentioned Act shall be under consideration. I am, &c.<sup>21</sup>

---

21. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To JAMES IREDELL<sup>23</sup>**

United States, February 13, 1790.

Sir: One of the Seats on the Bench of the Supreme Court of the United States having become vacant by the resignation of the Gentleman<sup>24</sup> appointed to fill the same; I have thought fit, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to appoint you to that Office, and have now the pleasure to enclose you a Commission to be one of the Associate Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States.



You have, Sir, undoubtedly considered the high importance of a Judicial System in every civil Government, It may therefore be unnecessary for me to say anything that would impress you with this idea in respect to ours. I must, however, observe, that, viewing, as I do, the Judicial System of the United States as one of the main Pillars on which our National Government must rest; it has been my great object to introduce into the high Offices of that department such Characters, as, from my own knowledge or the best information, I conceived would give dignity and stability to the Government, at the same time that they added lustre to our national Character. I have the honor etc,  
With due consideration Your etc.<sup>25</sup>

---

23. Of North Carolina.

---

24. Robert Hanson Harrison.

On February 13 Washington wrote a brief note to Attorney General Edmund Randolph, granting him leave to return to Virginia; "but hope that your absence from the Seat of government will not exceed the time mentioned in your letter to me of the 5th instant." This note is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

---

25. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To WILLIAM PACA

United States, February 13, 1790.

Sir: The appointment which you now hold as Judge of the United States in and for the district of Maryland, having been made during the Recess of the Senate of the United States, can endure no longer than to the end of their present Session; and a new Commission, specifying your appointment by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, will become necessary for your continuance in the discharge of the duties of that Office. This Commission I have now the pleasure to enclose, requesting that you will acknowledge the receipt of it as soon as it gets to your hands. I am  
etc.<sup>22</sup>

---

22. In an unidentified writing. The "Letter Book" copy contains the following note: "Copies of the above letter was transmitted to the Judges of the Districts of Virginia and South Carolina, and to Wm. Nelson, Attorney for the District of Virginia."

**To SAMUEL POWEL**

New York, February 21, 1790.

Dear Sir: I have the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of a letter which you have been so good as to write to me by the direction of the Philadelphia Society for promoting agriculture, and I beg leave to request your communication of my thanks to the Society for their polite attention, in the present which accompanied it.

Among the advantages resulting from this Institution, it is particularly pleasing to observe that a spirit of emulation has been excited by the rewards offered to excellence in the several branches of rural œconomy, and I think there is every reason to hope the continuance of those beneficial consequences from such well judged liberality.

As no one delights more than I do in the objects of your Institution, so no one experiences more real pleasure from every proof of their progress, among which it marks the discernment of the society to have distinguished Mr. Mathewson's<sup>30</sup> improvement in the useful art of making cheese.

With sincere wishes for the advancement of our agricultural interests, and, with great regard etc.<sup>31</sup>

---

30. John Matthewson, of Rhode Island.

---

31. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To GOVERNOR JOHN HANCOCK**

United States, February 22, 1790.

Sir: I have been honored with your Excellency's letter of the 10th instant enclosing a Resolve of the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and sundry documents relative to the Eastern boundary of the United States.

Previous to the receipt of your Excellency's letter, I had laid this subject before the Senate of the United States<sup>32</sup> for their consideration, with such documents respecting it as had been transmitted

to the former Congress from the State of Massachusetts: to these I added your letter and the Resolve immediately upon their getting to my hands. I have the honor etc.<sup>33</sup>

---

32. See Washington's message to the Senate, Feb. 18, 1790, *ante*.

---

33. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Paper*.

## To ELIJAH HUNTER

February 25, 1790.

Sir: I have received your letter of yesterday with its enclosures, which are herewith returned. The Gentleman who delivered my message to you, which you say was given in answer to your former letter, mistook the purport of it. It was not your person, or character I had forgotten, but the transactions in detail to which you alluded.

It is not possible for me, with any degree of propriety, to tread back ground I passed over seven years ago, when no application has been made to me in all that time: and when my accounts with the public closed with the resignation of my Commission, especially too, as it appears by the papers handed to me, that you have been paid, agreeable to your own charge, for the services you are *now* desirous of bringing again to view. To obtain which appears to have been the design of the Certificates adduced. The effect of which, to the best of my recollection, was the kind of reward you seemed, at that time, to have had in contemplation. As you were employ'd principally by, or thro', General McDougall, who, I well remember, had two hundred Guineas put into his hands, with which to pay those who were used as secret Agents, I always supposed (if more than recommending you to the State of New York, which seemed to be your great if not only object, was expected) that this money, or a part thereof, would be applied.

From this view of the matter you will readily see that I cannot take any other steps in it than what have been already effected. I am etc.<sup>34</sup>

---

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On February 28 Lear wrote to Daniel Grant, of Baltimore, to know if "a complete cook" could be obtained for the President's family. Lear's letter is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

## To PRESIDENT THOMAS MIFFLIN

United States, March 15, 1790.

Sir: I have had the honor to receive your Excellency's letter of the 10th inst enclosing a letter addressed to the Executive of the State of Pennsylvania by several very respectable Inhabitants of the County of Washington representing the mischiefs which have been done for several years past in that County by the Indians, expressing their apprehensions of further interruption, and requesting the Interposition of Council with the President of the United States in behalf of the Inhabitants of Washington County. I have already laid before Congress all such papers and official information as have come to my hands, respecting depredations which have been committed on the Southern and Western frontiers of the United States. In a word, I have exhibited to them everything in my possession that can bring to their view the situation of our affairs in those parts. This communication from your Excellency shall be added thereto. And when Congress have duly considered the situation of our frontiers, and shall make such provision for their Defence and protection as the nature of the case seems to require, and circumstances will permit, there will be no delay in carrying such measures into effect as shall operate in a general and systematical manner.

I have the honor etc.<sup>47</sup>

---

47. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On March 15, according to *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, a committee of Roman Catholics waited upon the President with a congratulatory address, to which the President replied. Washington said, in part:

"I feel, that my conduct in war and in peace has met with more general approbation than could reasonably have been expected: and I find myself disposed to consider that fortunate circumstance, in a great degree, resulting from the able support and extraordinary candor of my fellow-citizens of all denominations....

"...As mankind become more liberal, they will be more apt to allow, that all those, who conduct themselves as worthy members of the community are equally entitled to the protection of civil government. I ever to see America among the foremost nations in examples of justice and liberality. And I presume, that your fellow-citizens will not forget the patriotic part, which you took in the accomplishment of their revolution and the establishment of their government; or the important

assistance, which they received from a nation in which the roman catholic religion is professed...may the members of your Society in America, animated alone by the pure spirit of christianity, and still conducting themselves as the faithful subjects of our free government, enjoy every temporal and spiritual felicity."

Both the address and the reply are recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To GOVERNOR BEVERLEY RANDOLPH**

United States, March 20, 1790.

Sir: Your Excellency's letter of the 10th inst.; with its enclosures has been duly received.

It appears from the best information which I can obtain, that the place where Piamingo's Amunition was deposited, at the time of Colo. Campbell's writing to the Executive of Virginia, is not such as to subject it to file danger which was apprehended; for the vicinity is pretty well inhabited, and the people thereof knowing that their tranquility might in a great measure depend upon the security of that amunition, would not tamely permit it to be carried off until Piamingo shd. return with the detachment of his own Warriors, which it seems he had gone for to guard it to the Chickasaw Towns. And if this was not the case, it is highly probable, that if the capture of it was premeditated, it would be attempted before any communications could reach the spot from this place; the opinion, therefore, which you gave in your answer to Colo. Campbell, with respect to "the inhabitants embodying themselves as voluntiers for the protections of the property of our Allies" meets my approbation. If, however, it shoud be found, contrary to the information before stated, that the place in which the Amunition is lodged, is not sufficiently secure, or if Piamingo should not arrive in season with the guard; I think it would be advisable to have it removed to the nearest settlement that could give it perfect security. I have the honor etc.<sup>48</sup>

---

48. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To BARON POELLNITZ**

New York, March 23, 1790.

Sir: I received a few days ago your letter on the subject of establishing a farm under the public patronage for the purpose of encreasing and extending agricultural knowledge; in answer to which,

I have only leisure to make the following general observations. As I have passed a considerable portion of my life very satisfactorily in the business of agriculture, it will be understood, that I am alike fond of it on individual account, and on account of its public emoluments. But, however convinced I am of the great advantages to be derived to the Community from improvements in it, however susceptible of improvements I consider the present state of farming in this Country, and however desirous I am of seeing these improvements take place immediately, yet, in my public capacity, I know not whether I can with propriety do any thing more at present, than what I have already done. I have brought the subject in my speech, at the opening of the present Session of Congress, before the national Legislature. It rests with them to decide what measures ought afterwards to be adopted for promoting the success of the great objects, which I have recommended to their attention. I can only say further, that whatever wise and prudent plans may be deemed most feasible and effectual (as being clearly within the functions and abilities of the general Government) will meet with my ready and hearty concurrence.

Since the Seat of Government of the United States is not yet determined, and since the subject of Finance

has not yet received such a form as may justify any considerable new expenditures, it is hardly probable that Congress could enter deeply into the discussion of your meditated improvements in agriculture, during their actual Session. But, I request, Sir, you will be persuaded, that, at all events, I have a proper sense of your zeal in this matter, that I have great confidence in your ability, and ardent wishes for your success; being with due consideration, Sir, &c.<sup>49</sup>

---

49. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To STEPHEN STEWART<sup>51</sup>**

New York, March 25, 1790.

Sir: You will receive with this a medal struck by order of the late Congress in commemoration of the much approved conduct of your Son (the late Colo. John Stewart) in the assault of Stoney Point, and was to have been presented to him as a mark of the high sense which his Country entertained of his services on that occasion.

This Medal was put into my hands by Mr. Jefferson and it is with singular pleasure that I now transmit it to you, as it must afford some pleasing consolation, when reflecting upon the loss of a worthy Son. I am etc.<sup>52</sup>

---

51. Of Annapolis, Md.

---

52. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To ANTHONY WAYNE**

New York, March 25, 1790.

Sir: You will receive with this a Medal struck by order of the late Congress in commemoration of your much approved conduct in the assault of Stoney Point, and presented to you as a mark of the high sense which your Country entertains of your services on that occasion.

This Medal was put into my bands by Mr. Jefferson, and it is with singular pleasure that I now transmit it to you. I am etc.<sup>53</sup>

P. S. I embrace this opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st of February which reached my hands a few days since.<sup>52</sup>

---

53. The "Letter Book" notes that "Copies of the above letter" (minus. of course, the P. S.) "was transmitted to General Morgan of Virginia. Colo. Washington or South Carolina, and Governor Howard of Maryland, with their Medals, which was struck by order of the late Congress, in approbation of their conduct at the battle of the Cowpens."

---

52. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To THE CHIEF JUSTICE AND ASSOCIATE JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES**

New York, April 3, 1790.

Gentlemen: I have always been persuaded that the stability and success of the national Government, and consequently the happiness of the People of the United States, would depend in a considerable

degree on the Interpretation and Execution of its Laws. In my opinion, therefore, it is important, that the Judiciary System should not only be independent in its operations, but as perfect as possible in its formation.

As you are about to commence your first Circuit, and many things may occur in such an unexplored field, which it would be useful should be known; I think it proper to acquaint you, that it will be agreeable to me to receive such Information and Remarks on this Subject, as you shall from time to time judge expedient to communicate. I have the honor &c.<sup>58</sup>

---

58. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. No reply to this letter is now found in the *Washington Papers*; but the text of it is printed in the *Congressional Record* for Feb. 26, 1937, p. 1617, where it is undated and no source given. In the *Life and Correspondence of James Iredell* (vol. 2, p. 293) is printed Jay's letter, dated Sept. 15, 1790, inclosing the draft of the answer to Washington's letter.

## To MARQUIS DE LA LUZERNE<sup>72</sup>

New York, April 29, 1790.

Sir: Your letter of the 17th of January, replete with politeness to myself and useful informations respecting public affairs, has but lately been received.

In making my acknowledgments for the distinguished place I hold in your remembrance, and for the obliging terms in which you allude to my conduct in War and peace; I should do injustice to conceal the favorable sentiments, which were always entertained by myself and my Countrymen of your private deportment, and ministerial agency, while you resided in America. Those times, in which we always found you a sincere friend, were truly times of peril and distress. Now our situation is indeed much more eligible, and our prospects perhaps as good as could reasonably have been expected. We are recovering slowly from the calamities and burdens with which we were almost overwhelmed by a long and expensive War. Our Crops the year past have been more abundant, and our markets much better than usual. These circumstances will assist in enabling our Citizens to extricate themselves from their private and public debts. I hope a disposition will be found to prevail among us, for doing justice (as far as the nature of the case will admit) to all who afforded us their assistance in the hour of adversity. In the arrangement of such new and complicated business, as must inevitably come before our general Government, it is reasonably to be expected,

---

72. Luzerne had been raised to the rank of marquis and was then French Ambassador to England.



that the proceedings will be slow. It is devoutly to be wished that they may terminate in such just and wise measures, as will fully establish our happiness at home and credit abroad. I am much pleased with the interest you take in our national reputation, and the information you give that our credit is becoming so respectable in Europe, under the influence of our new Government.

You are right in conceiving, that nothing can be indifferent to me, which regards the welfare of the French Nation. So far removed from that great Theatre of political action, and so little acquainted with many of the minute circumstances, which may induce important decisions, as I am; it would be imprudent for me to hazard opinions, which might possibly be unfounded. Indeed, the whole business is so extraordinary in its commencement, so wonderful in its progress and may be so stupendous in its consequences, that I am almost lost in the contemplation. Of one thing, however, you may rest perfectly assured, that nobody is more anxious for the happy issue of that business than I am; as nobody can wish more sincerely for the prosperity of the French Nation, than I do. Nor is it without the most sensible pleasure I learn, that our friend the Marquis de la Fayette, has, in acting the arduous part which has fallen to his share, conducted himself with so much wisdom and apparently to such general satisfaction.

We, at this great distance from the Northern parts of Europe, hear of Wars and rumors of Wars, as if they were the events or reports of another Planet. What changes the death of the Emperor will occasion in the other Cabinets of Europe, time

is yet to inform us. A spirit for political improvements seems to be rapidly and extensively spreading through the European Countries. I shall rejoice in seeing the condition of the Human Race happier than ever it has hitherto been. But I should be sorry to see, that those who are for prematurely accelerating those improvements, were making *more haste than good speed*, in their innovations. So much prudence, so much perseverance, so much disinterestedness and so much patriotism are necessary among the Leaders of a Nation, in order to promote the national felicity, that sometimes my fears nearly preponderate over my expectations. Better, however, will it be for me to leave such foreign matters to those, who are more competent to manage them: and to do as much good as I can in the little sphere where I am destined to move at present. With sentiments of the highest esteem etc.<sup>73</sup>

---

73. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

An interesting and informative letter from William Jackson to Clement Biddle should be quoted here. It is dated "New York, Wednesday noon May 2, 1790...The inclosed letter, from Doctor Bard, to Doctor Jones, is transmitted to you with a view to ensure *secrecy, certainty, and dispatch* in the

delivery of it. To relieve you from any extraordinary personal anxiety I am happy to inform you that the symptoms which attend the President's indisposition, are not threatening; but it has been thought the part of prudence to call upon Doctor Jones, in anticipation of any unfavorable change that *may* arise. I need not repeat to you the necessity of delivering the letter with *privacy*, and keeping the object of it a secret from every person: even Mrs Biddle. Doctor Jones may want your aid to accelerate his arrival at New York, and I am persuaded you will give him every assistance in your power. The Doctor's prudence will suggest the propriety of setting out as privately as possible; perhaps it may be well to assign a personal reason for visiting New York, or going into the Country." This letter is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and bears on the address sheet the following: "Coln Cummings And All the Rest of the proprietors is Requested to forward this without Delay J Cummins. Mr. Fresheck will take a Rect. & see if an answer is wanted. Jno. Cummings. recd. Thursday 13 May 10 ½ OC A M. D. J. set off at 1 O. C. same day."

On May 4 the triennial meeting of the State Societies of the Cincinnati at Philadelphia addressed a congratulatory address to Washington, to which be replied at some unknown date. His reply, together with the address entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

## To RICHARD HARRISON<sup>74</sup>

United States, May 23, 1790.

Sir: It having been intimated to the President of the United States that the appointment of Consul for the Port of Cadiz<sup>75</sup> would be agreeable to you, and your having heretofore transacted the business of the United States in that place giving you good pretensions to that office; he has directed me to inform you that the appointment of Consuls for foreign Ports will probably come soon under his consideration, and he is therefore desirous of knowing your wishes on this head in Season. I am etc.

P.S. there is no Salary annexed to the Consulships from the United States.<sup>76</sup>

---

74. Of Alexandria Va.

---

75. Spain.

---

76. This letter was signed "Tobias Lear," and is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On May 30 Lear acknowledged, for the President, to Thomas Wignell, two copies of "The Contrast" Lear's letter is recorded in the "Letter Book."

## To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

New York, June 3, 1790.

My dear Marquis: Your kind letter of the 12th of January is, as your letters always are, extremely acceptable to me. By some chance its arrival had been retarded to this time. Conscious of your friendly dispositions for me, and realizing the enormous burden of public business with which you was oppressed, I felt no solicitude but that you should go directly forward and happily effect your great undertakings. How much, how sincerely am I rejoiced, My dear Marquis, to find that things are assuming so favorable an aspect in France! Be assured that you always have my best and most ardent wishes for your success; and that, if I have not troubled you with letters of late, it was because I had nothing, which it was very essential to communicate. and because I knew how much better your time was employed than in answering letters merely of a private nature.

You have doubtless been informed from time to time of the happy progress of our affairs. The principal difficulties which opposed themselves in any shape to the prosperous execution of our Government seem in a great measure to have been surmounted. A Good temper prevails among our Citizens. Rhode Island has just now acceded to the Constitution,<sup>85</sup> and has thus united under the general government all the States of the original Confederacy.

---

85. Rhode Island ratified May 29, 1790.

Vermont we hope will soon come within the pale of the Union. Two new States<sup>86</sup> exist under the immediate direction of the General Government, Viz. that at the head of which is Genl. St. Clair, and that which consists of the territory lately ceded by the State of North Carolina.

Our government is now happily carried into operation. Although some thorny questions still remain, it is to be hoped that the wisdom of those concerned in the national Legislature will dispose of them prudently. A funding system is one of the subjects, which occasions most anxiety and perplexity. Yet our revenues have been considerably more productive than it was imagined they would be. In the last year, the plentiful crops and great prices of grain, have vastly augmented our remittances. The rate of exchange is also much in our favor. Importations of European goods have been uncommonly extensive, and the duties payable into the public Treasury proportionably so. Our Trade to the

East Indies flourishes. The profits to Individuals are so considerable as to induce more persons to engage in it continually; a single vessel just arrived in this Port pays 30,000 Dollars to Government. Two Vessels fitted out for the fur trade to the North West coast of America have succeeded well. The whole outfits of Vessels and cargoes cost but £7,000: one is returning home loaded with India produce, the other going back to the Coast of America; and they have deposited 100,000 Dollars of their profits in China. I mention this to shew the spirit of enterprise that prevails. I hope and trust our Commerce with the West India Islands belonging to different Nations (which is at present of no great consequence) will shortly be placed upon a better footing. As the People of this Country

---

86. Northwest Territory and Tennessee.

are sensible of the generous conduct of the French Nation, I can, with great satisfaction, give it as my decided opinion, that the most friendly dispositions prevail on our side the water towards that nation.

Many of your old acquaintances and Friends are concerned with me in the Administration of this Government. By having Mr. Jefferson at the Head of the Department of State, Mr. Jay of the Judiciary, Hamilton of the Treasury and Knox of that of War, I feel myself supported by able Co-adjutors, who harmonize extremely well together. I believe that these and the other appointments generally have given perfect satisfaction to the Public. Poor Colo. Harrison, who was appointed one of the Judges of the Supreme Court, and declined, is lately dead.<sup>87</sup>

I have, a few days since, had a severe attack of the peripneumony kind: but am now recovered, except in point of strength. My Physicians advise me to more exercise and less application to business. I cannot, however, avoid persuading myself, that it is essential to accomplish whatever I have undertaken (though reluctantly) to the best of my abilities. But it is thought Congress will have a recess this summer, in which case I propose going for a while to Mount Vernon. With sentiments of the sincerest affection etc.<sup>88</sup>

---

87. Robert Hanson Harrison died Apr. 2, 1790.

---

88. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To MARQUISE DE LAFAYETTE**

New York, June 3, 1790.

Madam: It gives me infinite pleasure, in acknowledging the receipt of your polite letter of the 14th of January last, to transmit the Brevet Commission, that was desired for M. Poirey. Aside of his services in America, which alone might have entitled him to this distinction, his attachment to the Marquis de la Fayette and your protection added claims that were not to be resisted. And you will, I dare flatter myself, do me the justice to believe that I can never be more happy than in according marks of attention to so good a friend to America and so excellent a patriot as Madame la Marquise de la Fayette. Nor did she need any excuse for making use of her own language to be the interpreter of so much politeness and persuasion as she has found means to convey in one short letter. In truth that language, at least when used by her, seems made on purpose to have fine things communicated in it; and I question whether any other, at least in the hands of any other person, would have been equally competent to the effect.

By some accident your letter reached me only a few days ago. This fact is the sole reason of your not hearing sooner from me, and must be an apology for any seeming neglect on my part. I request you will present my compliments to the Gentlemen who desired to be so cordially remembered to me. Mrs. Washington and her two youngest Grand-Children (who live with us) join me in offering our affectionate regards to your family: in whose welfare, believe me Madam, no one is more deeply interested than he who has the honor to subscribe himself, Yours etc.<sup>89</sup>

---

89. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On June 3 Washington acknowledged to David Ramsay a copy of his *History of the American Revolution* (2 vols., 1789), "Accept my acknowledgement and best thanks for this mark of polite attention. from which I expect to derive much pleasure and satisfaction in the perusal." This letter is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To GOVERNOR ARTHUR FENNER**

New York, June 4, 1790.

Sir: In acknowledging the receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 29th of May, I cannot forbear to congratulate you and the people of your State upon the happy event which has since taken place by the adoption and ratification of the Constitution of the United States by the Convention of Rhode Island.

Having now attained the desirable object of uniting under one general Government all those States which were originally confederated, we have a right to expect, with the blessing of a divine providence, that our Country will afford us all those domestic enjoyments of which a free people only can boast; and at the same time secure that respectability abroad which she is entitled to by nature and from circumstances. Since the bond of Union is now complete, and we once more consider ourselves as one family, it is much to be hoped that reproaches will cease and prejudices be clone away; for we should all remember that we are members of that community upon whose general success depends our particular and individual welfare; and, therefore, if we mean to support the Liberty and Independence which it has cost us so much blood and treasure to establish, we must drive far away the dæmon of party spirit and local reproach.

I should be deficient in politeness as well as sensibility were I to close this letter without acknowledging the impression, which the great personal regard and warm wishes for my individual felicity expressed in your Letter has made on me. I have the honor &c.<sup>90</sup>

---

90. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To DANIEL OWEN<sup>96</sup>**

United States, June 19, 1790.

Sir: I have delayed acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the 29th of May, which contained official information of the adoption and ratification of the Constitution of the United States of America by the State of Rhode Island,<sup>97</sup> until the form of the ratification should be received, which together with your letter accompanying it got to my hands but a few days ago; and I take this opportunity of offering you my sincere congratulations upon this event which unites under one general government all the branches of the great American family, and I doubt not but it will prove as auspicious to the good people of your State as it is pleasing to the other parts of the Union. With due consideration I am etc.<sup>98</sup>

---

96. President of the Convention of Rhode Island for ratifying the Constitution of the United States.

---

97. A copy of this letter announcing the ratification was sent by Washington to Congress June 16 in a brief message to the Senate and House of Representatives. This message is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

98. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To SAMUEL POWEL**

New York, June 20, 1790.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 11th instant was handed to me by Mr. Parish,<sup>2</sup> together with proposals for publishing, and requesting permission to dedicate to me, the Travels of Mr. William Bartram through Florida &c.

The request I declined, as I have done many others of a similar nature; not with a view to discourage a work of this kind, which I am persuaded, if executed by an able hand, may be very useful among us; but to avoid with propriety future applications of this nature unless where some particular circumstances might induce a compliance. If affixing my name as a subscriber to this work can promote the author's good intentions, I am happy in having done it; and I sincerely wish it all the success, which its merits may demand. Mrs. Washington joins me in compliments to yourself and Mrs. Powel. With very great esteem &c.<sup>3</sup>

---

2. Robert Parrish.

---

3. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To JUDGE DAVID SEWALL<sup>11</sup>**

New York, June 28, 1790.

Sir: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th instant, enclosing a copy of the process of the district Court of Main against Thomas Bird for a capital offence.

No palliating circumstance appeared in the case of this unhappy Man to recommend him to mercy for which, he applied: I could not therefore have justified it to the laws of my Country, had I, in this instance, exercised that pardoning power which the Constitution vests in the President of the United States. I am etc.<sup>12</sup>

11. Of the Maine district.

---

12. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On June 29 Lear wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury inclosing a "Return of the persons appointed by the States for the Superintendence of certain Light Houses, Beacons, Buoys and public Piers in the United States." Lear's letter and "Return" is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To CHARLES WILLIAM FREDERICK DUMAS<sup>16</sup>**

New York, June 30, 1790.

Sir: This late acknowledgement of the receipt of your letter of the 6th of November 1789, and the little box which accompanied it, might require some particular apology had I only my own private concerns to attend to but when important public duties require my constant attention every allowance must be made for the want of punctuality in those things which regard me individually.

I beg, Sir, that you will accept my best thanks for the polite manner in which you have transmitted to me the poems and epistles which the Society of Leyden, for the encouragement of the liberal arts in Holland have done me the honor to send to me; and at the same time I must ask the favor of you to forward the enclosed letter to that Society,<sup>17</sup> which is expressive of the sense I entertain of their polite attention to me. I am etc.<sup>18</sup>

---

16. Secret agent for the United States in Holland during Revolutionary War.

---

17. A letter to the protectors and directors of the Poetical Society of Leyden in Holland (dated June 30) is recorded in the "Letter Book." It is a politely formal acknowledgement. A copy of Dirk Erkelens' "George Washington, Lierzang," and of G. Brender á Braadis's "George Washington, Lierzang," and other laudatory poems, printed in Leyden, 1789 (?), is in the Library of Congress.

---

18. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To THE EARL OF BUCHAN**



New York, June 30, 1790.

My Lord: I received a few days ago the letter which your Lordship did me the honor to write to me on the 27th of March last; accompanied with a view of Doctor Anderson's<sup>13</sup> proposed periodical publication.<sup>14</sup>

Doctor Anderson's plan appears judicious, and if the execution shall equal the design in goodness (as from your account of the Author we have reason to expect) there can be no doubt but his Journal will be of great utility wherever it may be circulated. For the purpose of promoting the circulation, by bringing its object and importance more generally into notice, some account of this literary undertaking will be published in the Gazette of the United States: a paper which is read extensively in America.

From the multiplicity of business, of different kinds, in which I am involved, I have myself less leisure than I could wish for attending to new publications. I shall, however, be glad to give all the encouragement in my power to the work in question, as well on account of its own merits, as to demonstrate the real respect and esteem, with which I have the honor etc.<sup>15</sup>

---

13. James Anderson, a Scotch economist and agriculturist.

---

14. Anderson published, among other things, *Selections from the Correspondence of George Washington and James Anderson* (Charlestown, Mass.: 1800).

---

15. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To DUCHESNE, DE BARTH, THIEBAUD, AND THEIR ASSOCIATES IN THE SCIOTO SETTLEMENT**

N: York, June 30, 1790.

Gentlemen: At the time when your first application arrived, my health was unfortunately in such an impaired condition as to prevent me from attending to any business whatever. My sickness at that period, also, deprived me of the pleasure of seeing several Gentlemen, concerned in the Scioto Settlement, who were then in this Town. Upon my recovery, and before those Gentlemen had returned to Alexandria, I received another address.<sup>19</sup> But understanding that arrangements had been made to remove most or all of the difficulties which had occurred; and understanding

likewise that the Persons best advised on the subject were well satisfied with the measures which had been taken, and in general with the prospects; I omitted to acknowledge the receipt of those applications at an earlier day. The variety of objects which demanded my immediate attention, on the re-establishment of my health, must be considered (as was really the case) a principal occasion of this delay on my part.

The design of this letter is particularly to acquaint you, Gentlemen, that I had not through inattention neglected taking notice of your addresses; to welcome you upon your arrival in this Country; and to assure you of all that *countenance and protection* from the General Government of the United States, which the Constitution and Laws will enable the Executive to afford under existing circumstances.

With the sincerest wishes for your health, tranquility and prosperity I am etc.<sup>20</sup>

---

19. Neither the "application" nor "address" is now found in the *Washington Papers*.

---

20. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To DIEGO DE GARDOQUI

New York, July 1, 1790.

Sir: I have had the pleasure to receive the two letters which you wrote to me on the 21st of December last from Bilboa, giving information of your safe arrival at that place after a passage rendered peculiarly tedious by the weather and your indisposition. As impressions made by bad weather at sea seldom continue long after we get on shore; and your indisposition was almost removed at the time of your writing, I flatter myself that before this, you enjoy your usual tranquility and good health.

I thank you, Sir, for the interest you take in my welfare and personal happiness, and it is with pleasure I can inform you that I now enjoy a tolerable share of health after several weeks of severe illness which had nearly terminated my existence.

It is unnecessary for me to touch upon the political occurrences at this place, as they are undoubtedly banded to you from time to time by Mr. Viar.<sup>21</sup>

The accession of the State of Rhode Island to the Constitution of the United States, has compleated our union under the general Government; and if we should be so happy as to see you again among us, I trust you will find harmony in our councils and respectability in our political concerns.

Mrs. Washington thanks you for your polite remembrance of herself and Grand-children and requests her compliments may be give, to you. With esteem etc.<sup>22</sup>

---

21. José Ignacio de Viar. He was Spanish commissioner to the United States.

---

22. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### To COMTE DE SÉGUR<sup>23</sup>

New York, July 1, 1790.

Sir: I have had the honor to receive your Excellency's letter of the 24th of August last; and I beg that you will be persuaded, that I have a grateful heart for the congratulations, which you offer upon the organization of our new government, as well as for the warm expressions of personal attachment and good wishes for my happiness which your letter contained.

It is with singular pleasure I can inform your Excellency that the Union of the States is now complete under the new Government, by the late accession of Rhode Island to the Constitution. This event will enable us to make a fair experiment of a Constitution which was framed solely with a view to promote the happiness of a people. Its effects hitherto have equalled the expectations of its most sanguine friends; and there can remain no reasonable doubts of its producing those consequences, which were expected from an equal and efficient Government.

Should the conduct of the Americans, whilst promoting their own happiness, influence the feelings of other nations, and thereby render a service to mankind, they will receive a double pleasure, in which no one will rejoice more than he, who has the honor to subscribe himself, your Excellency's, &c.<sup>24</sup>

---

23. Then French Minister to Russia.

---

24. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

**To GOVERNOR CHARLES PINCKNEY**

New York, July 5, 1790.

Dear Sir: I have had the pleasure to receive your letter of the 14th of June, and a few days after a duplicate of the same, each enclosing a copy of the Constitution lately formed for your State.

The address of the Convention,<sup>25</sup> which you mentioned in your letter, has been presented by the Gentlemen in Congress from South Carolina; and I have endeavored to express, in my answer thereto, the grateful sense which I have of the favorable opinion entertained of me by the people of that State.

I sincerely wish that the citizens of South Carolina may experience, under this new form of Government every species of political happiness that can result from equal and just laws wisely executed.

I thank you, my dear Sir, for the friendly anxiety which you express for my health, and have the pleasure to inform you that it is now pretty well established.

Mrs. Washington thanks you for your polite remembrance of her and desires her compliments may be presented to you. With sentiments of esteem etc.

P.S. In consequence of measures which I have taken for that purpose, and the agency of a person sent into the Creek nation with that express view, I have received certain information that Mr. McGillivray and a number of the head men of the Creeks are now on their way to this place.<sup>26</sup>

---

25. This address is dated May 31 and, with Washington's reply, which is undated, is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*. In his reply Washington said, in part: "If there be for me any peculiarly just subject of exultation, and with an honest pride I avow the fact, it is in being the citizen of a country, whose inhabitants were so enlightened and disinterested as to sacrifice local prejudices and temporary systems for the sake of rendering secure and permanent that Independency, which had been the pride of so much treasure and blood. Animated with the hope of transmitting to Posterity the spirit of a free constitution in its native purity; they have, since the conclusion of the war evinced the rectitude of their principles, as well as proved themselves by their practice worthy of their successes."

---

26. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On July 6 L P Van Berckel wrote to Lear, complaining of the actions of the postilion of the President's carriage. Lear answered, the same day, that "I have now learnt from the Gentlemen who were yesterday in the Presidents Carriage, that they gave orders to the Postillian to keep in the rear of General Knox's carriage; which he accordingly obeyed" Lear's letter is recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

## **To COMTE DE ROCHAMBEAU**

New York, August 10, 1790.

The little anecdote which you recall to mind, My dear Count, of your Countrymen at Rhode Island who burnt their mouths with the hot soup, while mine waited leisurely for it to cool, perhaps, when politically applied in the manner you have done, has not less truth than pleasantry in its resemblance of national characters.<sup>53</sup> But if there shall be no worse consequence resulting from too great eagerness in swallowing something so delightful as liberty, than that of suffering a momentary pain or making a ridiculous figure with a scalded mouth; upon the whole it may be said you Frenchmen have come off well, considering how immoderately you thirsted for the cup of liberty. And no wonder as you drank it to the bottom, that some licentiousness should have been mingled with the dregs.

To view your Revolution in another and more serious point of light. It was impossible, in such a Country, and during such a struggle, but that disagreeable things, and even great enormities in some instances must have happened. Too many doubtless have occurred. Not so many, however, have existed as the English News-Papers have attempted to make us believe. For had

we credited all the evil stories we have seen in them, we should almost have set it down for granted that the race of Frenchmen were about becoming extinct, and their Country a desert. So many of you, on different occasions, have they killed. Happily for you, we remembered how our own armies, after having been all slain to a man in the English News Papers, came to life again and even performed prodigies of valour against that very Nation whose News-papers had so unmercifully destroyed them. Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Trumbull and some others have taught us to believe more cautiously and more correctly on these points.

Now I will conclude by saying a word about ourselves, as I am certain your friendship is not less interested in our fate, than ours is in that of your Nation. We have a good government in Theory, and are carrying it pretty happily into practice. In a government which depends so much in its first

stages on public opinion, much circumspection is still necessary for those who are engaged in its administration. Fortunately the current of public sentiment runs with us, and all things hitherto seem to succeed according to our wishes. In the meantime population increases, land is cleared, commerce extended, manufactories, and Heaven smiles upon us with favorable seasons and abundant crops. With sentiments of the sincerest esteem etc.<sup>54</sup>

---

54. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To MARQUIS DE LA LUZERNE

New York, August 10, 1790.

Early in May last, I had the pleasure of addressing a letter to you, My dear Marquis, in which I dwelt pretty copiously on the state of affairs in this country at that time. Since then nothing very remarkable has occurred. The two great questions of funding the debt and fixing the seat of government have been agitated, as was natural, with a good deal of warmth as well as ability. These were always considered by me as questions of the most delicate and interesting nature which could possibly be drawn into discussion. They were more in danger of having convulsed the government itself than any other points. I hope they are now settled in as satisfactory a manner as could have been expected; and that we have a prospect of enjoying peace abroad, with tranquility at home. Congress is just on the point of adjourning; after which I propose to go to pass some time at Mount Vernon.

Colo. Humphreys, who will have the honor of putting this letter into your hands, can give you very particular intelligence respecting this Country and your *friends* in it, on whose number and fidelity you may count with the greatest confidence. For it is a serious truth, all classes of people in America remember your residence among them with a friendly mixture of satisfaction and regret

the former for your good Offices and agreeable society, the latter for your absence and a despair of ever having the pleasure of seeing you again.

The acquaintance you have had with Colo. Humphreys, first in America and afterwards in France, supersedes the necessity of any introduction or recommendation from me. As you know fully the manner in which that Gentleman has been in my family and connected with me for many years, I will say nothing more on his subject, than that he expects to travel in several parts of Europe; and that, if it should be convenient to your excellency to give him letters to any characters of your nation in the

Countries or Courts which he may happen to visit, I shall consider the interest you take on his behalf in a very acceptable and obliging point of light.

I would not forego so favorable an opportunity of renewing the professions of real esteem and consideration with which I have the honor etc.<sup>55</sup>

---

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To COMTE D'ESTAING

New York, August 10, 1790.

Sir: Not knowing how far I may have a secure conveyance for this letter, which is merely designed to announce the receipt of your highly esteemed favor of the 20th of March last,<sup>50</sup> I forbear to enter into any discussions on the interesting and delicate subject you have unfolded. Let it be sufficient for the present to say, that I consider the plan a proof of your real patriotism and good understanding. Whether the Scheme will ever be feasible in its utmost extent, or what advantages may be drawn from it by some modification hereafter time alone must disclose. In the meantime for the tokens of your personal attachment to me, and extraordinary respect for my friend which you are pleased to manifest, I request you will have the goodness to accept my best thanks. With sentiments of the highest consideration etc.<sup>51</sup>

---

50. In the *Washington Papers*, with a translation by Tobias. Lear. It suggested that Louisiana be made an independent State.

---

51. From the "Letter Book." copy in the *Washington Papers*.

## To THOMAS PAINE

New York, August 10, 1790.

Dear Sir: I have received in their due order, and have to acknowledge at this time my obligations for your three agreeable letters, in date October 16th, 1789, May 1st. and May 31st.<sup>47</sup> of the present

year. With the last I had also the pleasure to receive the Key of the Bastile;<sup>48</sup> in acknowledgment of which I write to the Marquis de la Fayette by this conveyance.

It must, I dare say, give you great pleasure to learn by repeated opportunities, that our new government answers its purposes as well as could have been reasonably expected, that we are gradually overcoming the difficulties, which presented themselves in its first organization, and that our prospects in general are growing daily more favourable. To detail the facts and circumstances, comprised under this general view of our affairs, would require more leisure than I have it in my power to devote to the subject at this period. Fortunately for me, Colo. Humphreys, with whom you are acquainted and who will probably have the pleasure of delivering this letter to you, will be able to explain our situation fully. To him, therefore, I refer you for all particulars: being with great esteem, dear Sir, &c.<sup>49</sup>

---

47. Papers letter of this date and the key of the Bastile were delivered to Washington by John Rutledge, jr. The letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

---

48. The key is at Mount Vernon.

---

49. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

---

## **To DIEGO DE GARDOQUI**

New York, August 10, 1790.

Sir: Colonel Humphreys, who, as you know, has been many years in my family, expects in his present tour to Europe to visit Spain. Should it be his good fortune to meet with you in that Kingdom, he will undoubtedly profit of the circumstance by renewing his acquaintance with you. In that case, he will have an opportunity of expressing on my part the sincere and great regard which he knows I entertain for you. And your civilities in return to him will be considered as very acceptable to me.

We have lately seen by the public Papers, that your Sovereign has been pleased to place you at the head of the Administration of the Revenues and Finances of the American Department. I am confident you will do me the justice to believe, Sir, that I rejoice extremely in your prosperity. On so honorable and confidential a mark of the Royal favor, I should certainly be the first to congratulate you in the most cordial manner. But at the same time I must have candour enough to assure you, that I feel the most sensible regret that this circumstance, so flattering and advantageous to yourself,



should forever cut us off from the hope of seeing you in this Country again. It is for the sake of your good alone that we shall be forced to acquiesce; and you must not esteem it as an unmeaning Compliment when I say, that, I presume, no man in his most Catholic Majesty's dominions could

be more acceptable to the Inhabitants of these States. 'That all persons who may be employed in the intercourse between the Dominions of his most Catholic Majesty and the United States may serve to promote a mutual good understanding, and to advance reciprocally the substantial interests of the two Nations (which, I am convinced, are not only entirely compatible with, but may be highly promotive to each other is the constant and ardent wish of, Sir Your etc.<sup>52</sup>

---

52. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

United States, August 12, 1790.

Sir: In reply to the wish expressed in your letter of this date, to go to Philadelphia on Monday next, I can only observe, that my concurrence therein will not be withheld if there are no obstructions of an official nature; anti this you can best ascertain yourself. I would, however, just mention, that as it may be necessary for me, in pursuance of the law to regulate trade and commerce with the Indian Tribes, to issue a Proclamation enjoining upon the People of the United States a strict observance of such treaties and regulations as are concluded with and made respecting the Indian tribes, and forbidding any encroachments to be made by them on the grounds or territories of the Indians, it might be best for you to see the Secretary of State or the Secretary of War, or both, upon this subject before your departure. I am etc.<sup>61</sup>

---

61. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

### **To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS**

New York, August 14, 1790.

Dear Sir: I have lately received a letter and my Account from Wakelin Welch and Son of London, dated June 1st by which I perceive there was at that time a balance of mine in their hands of only £95...16 sterling. This is a less sum than I imagined was there; and as their letter mentions their

having informed you of the balance, and it is probable your draughts upon them may exceed that sum, exclusive of those Articles which I last requested you to get, I have requested Colonel Humphreys to put into your bands a bill of exchange drawn by William Constable and Co. Messrs. Phyn, Ellices & English for £60 Sterling, if he should see you in London. Should you not be there at the time of his arrival, he is requested to enquire if. W. Welch & Son have answered your orders beyond the balance in their hands, and in case they have, he will leave the bill with them. He is also desired, if this bill is put into your bands, and should not be equal to the amount due you, to pay the balance for me. With very sincere esteem etc.<sup>65</sup>

---

65. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 15 Washington accompanied by Jefferson, Governor Clinton. Judge John Blair, Senator Theodore Foster, of Rhode Island, and Representatives Nicholas Gilman, of New Hampshire and William Loughton Smith, of South Carolina, David Humphreys, William Jackson, and Thomas Nelson, embarked on the packet *Hancock* for Newport, R. I. which was reached August 17.

On August 17 Washington received and answered an address from the Freeman of Newport. This address is dated in the "Letter Book" August 16, and Washington's reply is entered immediately following it therein. Sparks prints the reply under date of August 16.

On this same day (August 17) Washington received and answered an address from the master, wardens, and brethren of King David's Lodge of Masons in Newport. Both address and answer are entered in the "Letter Book." In the answer Washington said: "Being persuaded, that a just application of the principles, on which the masonic fraternity is founded, must be promotive of private virtue and public prosperity. I shall always be happy to advance the interests of the society, and be considered by them a deserving brother."

On this same day (August 17) Washington also received and answered addresses from the Hebrew congregation of Newport, and from the clergy of Newport. In replying to the former he said: "It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support....May the children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants, while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig-tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid."

And to the latter be said: "I am inexpressibly happy that by the smiles of divine Providence, my weak but honest endeavors to serve my country have hitherto been crowned with so much success, and apparently given such satisfaction to those in whose cause they were exerted. The same benignant influence, together with the concurrent support of all real friends to their country will still be necessary to enable me to be in any degree useful to this numerous and free People over whom I am called to preside." These addresses and answers are recorded in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 18, at 4 p. m., Washington arrived at Providence, where he was presented with addresses from the legislature, the inhabitants of Providence, and the Corporation of Rhode Island College, to all of which he returned answers. In replying to the Rhode Island Legislature, he said: "A change in the national constitution. conformed to experience and the circumstances of our country, has been most happily effected by the influence of reason alone; in this change the liberty of the citizen continues unimpaired, while the energy of government is so encreased as to promise full protection to all the pursuits of science and industry; together with the firm establishment of public credit, and the vindication of our national character. It remains with the people themselves to preserve and promote the great advantages of their political and natural situation; nor ought a doubt to be entertained that men, who so well understand the value of social happiness, will ever cease to appreciate the blessings of a free, equal, and efficient government." These addresses with Washington's replies, are entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On August 19 Washington left Providence in Captain Brown's packet, *Hancock*, and arrived at New York on August 22.

## **To GOVERNOR BEVERLEY RANDOLPH**

United States, August 24, 1790.

Sir: I had the honor to receive your Excellency's letter of the 4th Inst. with its inclosures, just as I was about to embark on a visit to Rhode Island, which has prevented my answering it 'till my return from thence.

Previous to the receipt of your Excellency's letter I had nominated and appointed the three Gentlemen who had heretofore acted in that office, Commissioners for settling accounts between the United States and individual States.

Although I received no official information of the report of two of the Commissioners to the House of Representatives respecting the Accounts of Virginia; yet the purport of it, and the effect which it had upon the Gentlemen from that State were communicated to me. Upon a knowledge of this circumstance I felt myself much embarrassed, and was led to make very particular inquiry into the official conduct and abilities of those Gentlemen before I gave the nomination of Commissioners to the Senate. The result of my investigations was favourable to the characters of the Gentlemen. They had, so far as I could learn, conducted themselves with integrity; and, except in the instance of the above report, no complaints had been uttered against them; and in this case, they went not to an impeachment of their integrity, but rather of their discretion in giving an opinion, where

facts only should have been stated; and the reception which this report has met with, and the comments upon it, will in my judgment, be such a lesson for future caution, that the State of Virginia will have no cause to apprehend a premature or uncandid decision upon any accounts which may come before them from that State.

Under these circumstances, and upon the fullest consideration I could give the subject, I could not see any just cause for removing men from office whose integrity and abilities bore the test of investigation, and who, undoubtedly, had a knowledge in the business of the department, equal, if not superior to others who had never been engaged in it.

I have entered thus minutely into this business with your Excellency as it appears to be a matter in which the State of Virginia feels peculiarly interested, that you may see I have not been inattentive to a subject of this magnitude. I say nothing of the peculiar delicacy and embarrassment which I have felt on this occasion, as being a native and citizen of Virginia; you will more readily conceive than I can express it. I have the honor etc.

P. S. Your Excellencys letter of the 10th of July enclosing a copy of a Certificate respecting the Lead Mines in Virginia, came duly to hand; but not requiring any particular answer I have delayed the acknowledgment thereof 'till this time.<sup>66</sup>

---

66. In the writing of Tobias Lear.

On August 24 Lear wrote to John Marsden Pintard, that he had been "directed by the President to inform you that it is with regret he must decline the honor which the St. Tammany's society would do him by having his Portrait taken. The President is detained now in this City only by some particular business with the heads of the Executive Departments, in which he is *constantly* engaged, and desirous of dispatching as soon as possible, being anxious to get to Virginia. He therefore requests

that you will be so good as to present his best thanks to the society for their politeness, and he trusts they will consider his declining their request in its proper light." Lear's letter is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

[H.S.P.]